


Civil War Memoirs

of

Alvareze B. Coggeshall



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1992
To: David, Karen, & Andrew Coggeshall
A Christmas Note

Merry Christmas
from
A.B.C. Indianapolis

CREDITS

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Introduction by Norman D. Coggeshall

Forward

When I was a little boy on an Illinois farm in the 1920's a marvelous episode occurred. A wonderful old man came to visit the family for few weeks. Although he stayed at my grandmothers house, across the road, he spent a lot of time in our house. What was so wonderful about this fine old gentleman was that he was such splendid company. He was a Civil War Veteran, he had lived across the United States all the way to California - his home at the time -, and he could and would tell us many wondrous things that he had seen or done.

That was great entertainment in those days to a family with an intellectual bent and living in a farmhouse without electricity, radio or even a telephone. With the cane and crutch he needed to walk he could make his way the 1/8th of a mile to our house almost every day. I was utterly entranced to hear him tell all those wonderful stories, especially about the Civil War.

This old man, probably in his 80's then, always groomed and distinguished looking with his moustache and in suit with tie, was my great-uncle - Uncle Al - and brother-in-law to my grandmother. He had come all the way from California to visit for a few weeks and after he left, we never saw him again. This was sad to a little boy who had loved to hear him talk.

Uncle Al had run away from home as a youth and joined the Union Army. After the war he struck out on his own and I believe he farmed in Illinois, in Minnesota, and eventually raised citrus fruit in California. His boyhood home had been near Richmond, Indiana from whence my paternal grandfather also came.

A few years after that visit our family came into possession of Uncle Al's memoirs. These were written in pencil in a series of small course paper tablets that schoolchildren used in those days - some of them were the old "goldenrod" tablets. These memoirs were lent around the family and to curious friends and miraculously only one page of that fragile paper was lost. After many years I came into possession of them and started to copy them. This was necessary to ensure their survival. Those pages that follow are a copy of the original material written in pencil.

Although Uncle Al didn't have many years of formal schooling he did well in life and was a highly respected man and a very articulate one. The material of his memoirs reflected the brief schooling. It was one continuous paragraph through those tablets without benefit of capital letters, paragraphs, periods or commas. The spelling is relaxed and interestingly variable.

I grew weary of copying so many of the pages so my daughter, Gwen Coggeshall Calabretta took over and finished the job. In our copying we broke the text up into paragraphs and added a very few commas. Other than that the material is just as he wrote it.

These memoirs which were mainly about his Civil War experiences were no doubt written many, many years after the events. In reading them one is struck by the immense amount of detail - also by the fact that so many events turn out the way they do. I suspect these qualities came from Uncle Al having told those stories many times in the intervening years - in those days there wasn't much entertainment and people did a great deal more story telling than now.

Alvareze B. Coggeshall was a direct descendant of John Coggeshall who came from Coggeshall, a town in England fairly near to London. This is documented in a book:

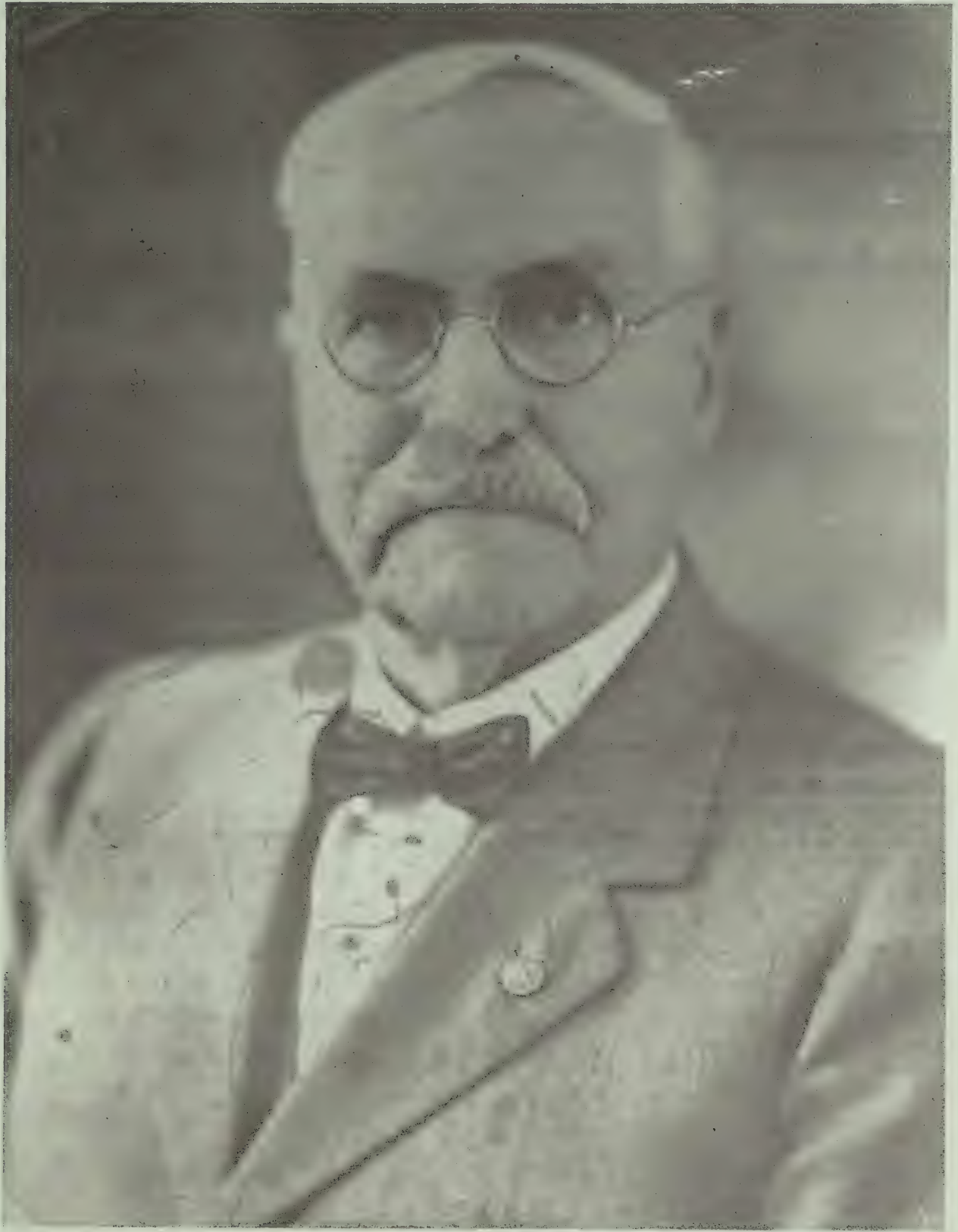
The Coggeshalls in America
Published by Goodspeed & Co.
Boston, Massachusetts 1930

I believe John Coggeshall came to Rhode Island in Pilgrim days. It is possible that all the Coggeshalls now living in the U.S. are his descendants. My brother, A. Barton Coggeshall, now living in the very house in which my grandmother lived, has a copy of the above book. In it we found my father's name - Lester Coggeshall and the names of our two oldest sisters - Jean and Gwen.

Feb. 12, 1979

Norman D. Coggeshall

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The above material constituted what was the first assembled copies that were distributed first. They comprised copies of the written reproduction of the original manuscript. The material was later typed; this is a copy of that material. August 18, 1980



Alvareze B. Coggeshall

During the 1920's, Alvarez Bicknell Coggeshall resided with his son and daughter-in-law, Mac and Ida, in Mankato at 520 Byron Street. A widower in his 70's, Alvarez would spend a little more than half the time each year with them. The few details we have of his days in Mankato come from his veterans records in the National Archives. One deposition was given by grocery store owners Louis F. and Hulda Mertens in 1926. They described Alvarez's habit of stopping at their store to rest on his way downtown, due to a hip problem.

Another source of information about Alvarez Coggeshall comes from his great-nephew, Norman Coggeshall, now a resident of Panama City, FL.

Norman recalls a visit from his great-uncle to their Illinois farm. Although he needed both a cane and crutch to walk, he was always groomed and distinguished looking with his moustache and dressed in a suit. A wonderful storyteller, he kept Norman and his family entertained with his stories of the Civil War, and his days in Minnesota and California. About this time, Alvarez wrote down his civil war memories. Although Alvarez had little formal schooling, he was a very articulate person. The following is an excerpt, misspellings included, of his recollection of a 16 year-old soldier:

"I had no time to watch eney one I went to loading and shooting as fast as I could I could see the smoke of the Rebs guns when they would fire at me that was all I could see to shoot at, the rebs soon located me and began to shoot at me that make me hug the tree pretty close for the bullets began to spatter against the tree on all sides except the side I was on I was the onley on to hold a space of 5 or 6 rods and the rebs concentrate thar attack on me I fired my gun so fast that it got so hot I could barley hold it in my hands and while I was standing with by side to the tree I had my haversack on my back it was full of grube I was loading my gun and I must have steped back a little and the rebs seen my haversack thay must have thought it was my head for they shot at it and the bullet cut both straps and let my haversack fall to the ground that thru me out of ballance I tryed to catch myself cought my foot on gun and fell flat on the ground I got up about as quick as I went down I went to shooting as fast as I could till my ammunition was all gone then I lay down behind the tree to rest the rebs must have seen me lay down the lead bullets hit the roots of the tree all around me one ball hit my shoe heel and knocked it off slick and clean so I got up and stood as close to the tree as could to keep from being hit while I was standing thar the rebel balls made the bark fly off the tree I was on the firing line a 2 PM was thar tile 8 PM and fighting ever minute I knew what it was to be a soldier I have never worked harder in my life ... (later)... I told the gard that I had fired 140 rounds of amination well he says that is strange circumstance for I have jus counted the place wher this tree was hit by

reble bullets and thar is 140 just as meney as you fired at the rebs."

Alvareze was born in Williamsburg, Wayne Co., IN on Jan. 13, 1848 to Job and Judith (Marine) Coggeshall. His death certificate states that he died in a Veterans' hospital in Fillmore, CA at the age of 89 of Jan. 29, 1937. His body was removed to Mankato, MN where (we assume) he is buried.

Personal Memoirs of Alvarez B. Coggeshall

To the readers of this history

the first 12 pages I tell a fue incidents that did hapen just befor I left home so you wil better understand what follows later on I hope you wil forgiv me if I do some bad spelling or if I leve out a word now and then.

it may make some ones head eack for a wile but I hope you wil be able to follow me and understand what I am trying to tell in may simple crude way [] ever word wil be the truth as I seen it and understoode at the time I started out I was the greenest and the most ignorant boy that ever lived you wil see that later as you read

Five boys siting on a hitchrack in frunt of a store Bill Duke Jim Johnson Lute Cranor and his brother Lonie Marton the place Willamsburg and time about 4 oclock thirty first day March 1864 the boys wer all talking of inlisting in the 57nd Regiment witch was at home on a furlow for 30 days the regiment had ben on the battle field for 2 years and had reinlisted for 3 years moor and had come home on the first of March Company D (?) * was made up of men and boys in Wayn County Ind when the Company was first organised thar was 20 or 25 men and boys of Willamburg and visinity in said Company thay surved 2 years on the battle field was in meney hard fought battles and now was at home with thar ranks prety well thined out fulley one third of the Company was dead or disabled not fit for survis the offosers of the Company was trying to inlist men and boys to fill up the ranks of the Company I spoke to a Leutenant ask him to let me go in his Company he says no Rees I wil not take you I do not want you to go to war you must stay at home he says your folks would never like me eney moor if I should inlist you he then told me not tell eney body that he had refused to inlist me he told me to keep my mouth shut I told him I would if he would keep his mouth shut as I did not want eney body to know that I waned to go to war he tuck me by the hand and says Rees you dont need to be afrade I wil not tell

this offeser was the onley person that I had ever told that I was going to the war so now the last day of March had come and the 57 boys woud start back to the battle field I had made up my mine to go with them I was in a peck of truble I knew that the folks would not let me go if thay found it out befor I got a way so while I was planing how to git a way at home the boys on the hitchrack was talking I could not hear what they wer saying at the time but thay all told me in a fue days after that .

Bill Duke was the largest and oldest a bout 18 years he got down off the hitch rack and standing in frunt of the 4 other boys he says well boys the 57 starts back for the south in the morning he says I feel like it is up to us to go with them help to fill up the rank of Company D he says how meney of you are redy to go with me

*editors question

Jim Johnson got down and standing beside of Bill says I am redy to go when Rees gos Leute Cranor says Jim you know doggone well that Rees wil never go to war Jim says Clint Edwards told me he thought Rees would go he says Rees has never said a word a bout going but Clint says Rees has something on his minde and you all know that Clint and Rees is grate chumbs Leute Cranor says cant we go if Rees dont go Andy Cranor says I wil not go if Rees dos not and Loney Martin says neather wil I Bill says I wish we had Rees hear I wander wher he is Jim Johnson looked up the street says hear he comes now Well Bill says we will soon know if Rees wil go wel I come up to the boys I sit down on an speing (?) * block a big block at the end of the hitchrack the boys all gathered around me all of them talking at the same time telling me thay wer all going back with the 57 wel I says boys if you all go Clint and I wil try to look out for old Willamsburg oh thay said we intend that you shal go with us you know we could not get along with out you

We all depend on you you know how you drilled the boy company last summer and fall and you dun a good job of it Bill Duke says Rees you remember the day we wer all drilling down in your dadys pasture the day that Andy Cranor hit George Richie on the head with a clob and we all thought he was dead we all ran away but you made Clint Edwards and Jim Johnson come back and help you bring George to life a gain while the rest of us run up town to our homes and hid in the barn or in the seller or under the bed

While you stayed with Gorge you made Clint take your old hat and bring watter from the mill race and pore it on Georgs face and he came to life then you had Clint to go up town and hunt up old Dr Taylor and have him to go to his office and you and Jim sneked Georg up the alley and got him in the back room of old docks office then you and old dock made Clint and Jim go to the frunt office you Rees stayed in with George and dock for a long time and when you three came out George had his head tide up in a white cloth Gorge went home and told his folks he had a fall out of a tree and hurt his head

Bill says now Rees you have never told one of us boys just how you and old dock ever got Gorge to go home and tell sutch a yarne as that Wel I told the boys that old dock made me promas never to devulge what we had dun I says boys it is better that we all keep our mouths shut we should all be glad that Gorge did tell that yarn of the fall out of a tree I am real glad he did if for he could have made a lot of truble for Andy Cranor wel the boys began to tell me whi I should joyn the 57 with them thay said thay wanted me with them as I had the nerve to do things.

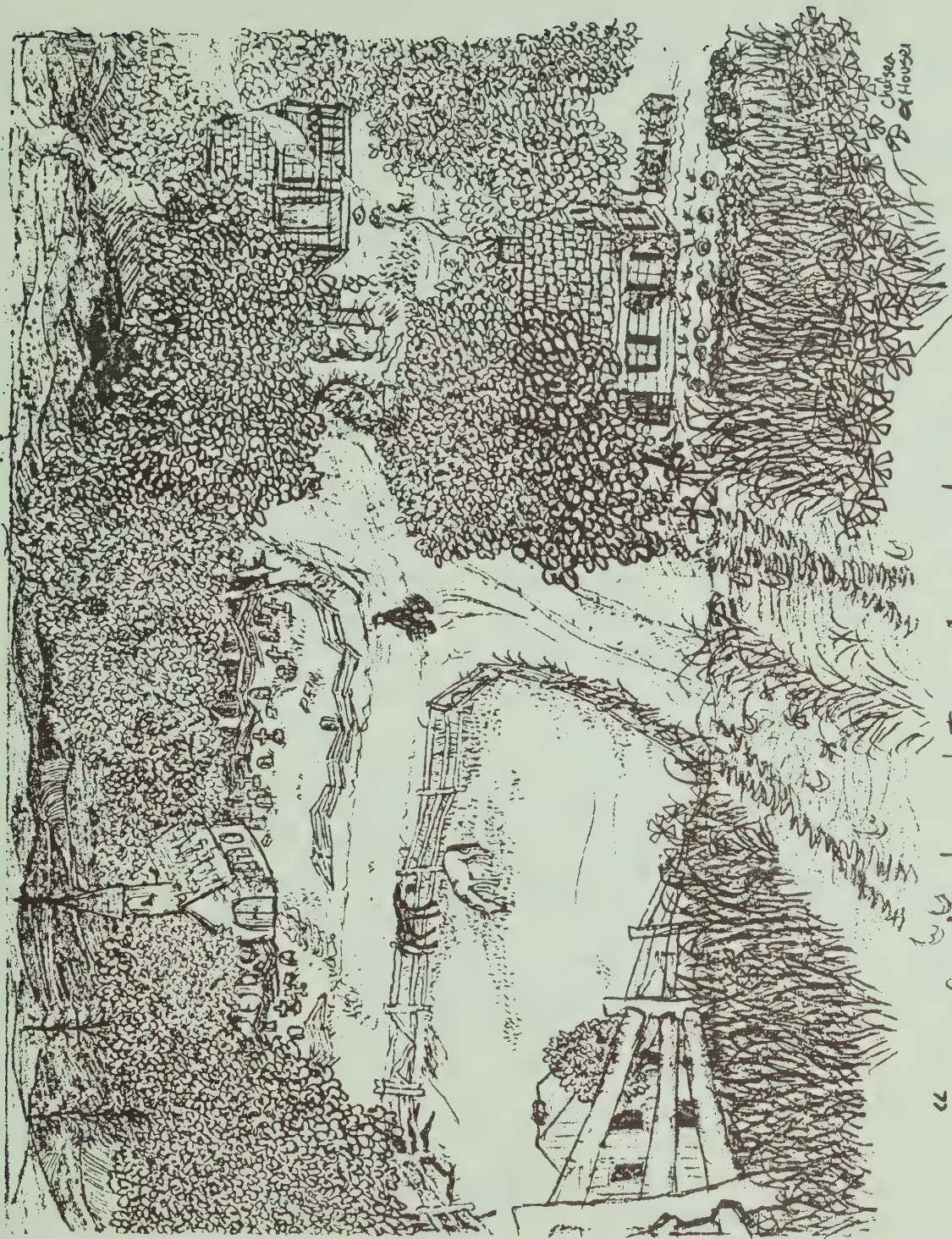
I says no boys I am not a going to promas you to go with you I do not want you to think that I am trying to keep eney of the boys from going to war neather do I want to advise eney of you to go to war for you know if you should get a leg or arm shot off and be a criple all your life that would make me feel very bad all the rest of my life I can not understand how you boys can stand thar befor me your verry best friend you ever had tell me you want me to go to war when you know what the results are liable to be no boys I can

not promas to go with you this is a matter each of us must deside for our selfs you have no right to tell me or eney one to go to war that is all boys then some of the boys got mad and called me all the mean low down names thay coud think of shook ther fist under my nose called me a coward.

I says goodby boys you will sing a diffrent song the next time I see you as the boys started to leve Lonie Martin come back to me and asked me to forgive him as he did not want me to think hard of him he says he is going to go with the 57 you know Brother Bob is in Company D and I ame to go if I haft to run away Lonies father was dead and he was bound out to a man by name of Study he was a year older than I was but not near as large I got Loney to go with me to the old mill where no one coud hear us talk Loney can I trust you to keep what I am going to tell you he said he would not tell eney one so he gave me his hand and promas on his honor not to tell so I told him that I had made up my mind befor the 57 come home that I would go back with them he said whi did you not tell the boys to day when thay talked so mean to you I said if I had it would have nocked me out of going wel he said I wil go with you so wil the rest of the boys if you will tell them I said Loney if you want to go with me you must do as I tell you or we will not git to Loneys home was 1 mile west of town I said meet me in the morning at sun up at the hotel thar wil be a lot of teams thar to take the 57 boys to Richmond to meet the 10 oclock train for Indinaplas and we can get a ride with some of them so Loney promast to be thar on time so we both went home to make redy for the get away next morning

I was rather glad Loney was going with me for I had felt a little nervous about undertaking the job of giting away all alone but now I had someone to help plan and to share my anxiety

I had a lot to do that evening after I had dun my feeding I fixed feed for the morning I was still feeding the sheep a mile from home ever morning so I filled a sack with corn so it would be redy I went to bed that night at the ordanary time but did not sleep a wink all night I wondered if I would ever sleep in that bed eney moor I new that none of the famley ever dreamed that I would run away to the war I felt that I was taking a grate resk but I felt I would come back aliv a better boy



"I stoped and turned around
and looked back at the little old
town that had been my home
my world"

Chapter I

The first day of April 1864 all fools day the night had ben a long one I thought morning would never come but like all mornings it did come

I could not wait for my brothers Lufe and Melvin to git up I was so excited I was in doubt as the how my plans would work out so I got up went out to barn fixed the corn feed redy for them to be turned in after brakefast and as I went to the house I met my brother going to the barn to do thar part of the work when I got to the house I did not go in I went on down town

I could see quite a crowd down at the Hotell 3 squares from our house some 5 or 6 teams with big wagons when I got down thar the 57 boys wer all thar and was giting redy to start to Richmond the sun was just coming up I looked around for Loney he was not thar wel I thought he had backed out so said to my self I wil go eney way I tryed to get the men that had the teames to let me ride with them but thay all had all thay could hall so thay drove off up the Richmond pike and left me standing thar in the streat feeling pretty blue I felt so bad I did not know what to do I went back home got thar just as the folks wer siting down to brakefast thay had not not missed me at all I sit down and eat my brakefast befor the rest of them did and left the house the folks all thought I went down to feed the sheep but instead I went down town I seen moor teams in town I thought I mite git to Richmond yet but thay all pulled out befor I got thar so I was standing on the corner feeling about as blue as indigo

then I seen Loney Martin coming on the run he came up to me and says my God Rees have thay all gone and left us I told him how thay war no room for me well Loney says I will back you out on walking to Richmond I says Loney if we git to Richmond by 10 oclock we haft to run wel he says run it is so we started on the run up Richmond pike now the pike runs due east and is up hill for one half a mile this hill is the same hill that I had walked up in the morning meny times the winter I went to school to sister Kgte

meney mornings when thar was a snow on the ground I would be the first one on the road and I would haft to brake the road thru the snow and when I would git to the top of the hill I would stop and turn around and look down on the little town of Williamsburg I could allmost see the roof and chimneys of ever house in town and of a real cold frosty morning it was a prity sight to see the blue smoke curling up from the chimneys of all the houses in town and over beyond the town was the creek with tall sickamoors standing along the bank makeing a kind of a back ground or border to the seen thar would be a frosty mist floteing up from the creek like a white cloud that would hang over the tops of the large sycamores this all made a verry pretty picture one that made an impression on me that never left me meny times in after years I could close my eyes and see that picture and now as Loney and I run all the way to the top of the hill we wer nearley give out and I stoped and turned around and

looked back at the little old town that had been my home my world

I could see my home the house the barn the trees along the mill race it seemed that all my life from my childhood up to the present time went racing thru my mind I was living it all over again Loney had gone on a few steps he turned and came back to me and laid his hand on my arm and says Rees what is the matter are you sick I said no I am bidding Willamburg good by I may never see it again well he says you will never see eney thing else if you stand thar so I give the last look as I thought then and turned around and troted on with Loney

it had rained all night and thar had ben a good many teams on the road that morning and the pike was quite muddy and slopy we both had on shoes and some times we git in mud over shoe top well we went on a dog trot till we had overtake a neighbor man with a load of corn he told us to git up on and ride so we did for we wer very near giv out but we did not ride moor than a mile we thought it was to slow for us we were afrade we would miss the train

so we got down and troted on again and was soon out of sight of the load of corn we had now coverd moor than half the distance we had 3 or 4 miles to go yet and we wer verry tired we did not know what time it was it was cloudy we could not see the sun we did not know how much time we had to go on we looked back and seen a 2 horse buggy coming with 2 men in it and when thay came up to us we seen it was the Richter brothers of Willamburg we asked them to let us ride with them and told them we wer going to inlist in the 57 thay said to go back home that thay would not help do a thing like that we asked them what time it was thay said it was 9:15 so we had 45 minuts to go 3 1/2 miles in so when Richters started on we caught on behind the buggy and helt on while thay drove in a fast trot we kep that up for 2 1/2 miles then we come up with a man in a spring wagon we let go of the buggy and asked the man to let us ride we told him we wanted to catch the 10 oclock train he said all wright I will git you thar in time so we rode in to Richmond and got to the station just as the train was redy to start I seen Cap Finney I went up to him told him I wanted to joyn his company he said all wright boys come right along with me he helped us on the train and got seats for us then he said boys wher have you been to git so muddy.

we told him we had come from Willamburg cence 8 oclock and near all the way a foot he said my God boy you have over taxed your strength and was right for we wer just redy to callaps Cap gave us a little brandy and we soon felt better by this time this train had started the RR as it gos west from Richmond has its tracks elevated over the Willamburg pike wher it comes in to Richmond now as the train I was on went over the Willamburg pike I looked out the window and seen brother Lafe on a horse down on the pike he was talking to someone in a buggy I knew he was after me and had ridden hard to overtake me but was just a little to late if he had a got a little bit sooner he would have got me so my plans was a

working all right but not much to brage about and it was offull hard on me as I was all in redy to drop

I leaned back in the car seat so tired and exhausted that I did not want to talk I was muddy all over all of the Willamburg boys gathered around me and had me to move over by the stove so my cloths would dry I had on a home made coat a butternut brown in color a strange soldier came thru the car he seen me and called me a reble and one of my friends knocked him down for it and made him leve the car

this was the first time I had ever been on a RR train I enjoyed the ride very much wel by the time we got to Indinaplas my cloths wer dry and the boys helped me to clean the dried mud off of them then Capt Finey told Loney and I to come with him and he would git us a good dinner at a lunch counter then we went to a recruiting office it was a verry large room 100 feet long by 40 wide with 15 or 20 government clerks along one side the room was full of men and boys that was standing around waiting to sign thar inlistment papers we had a long wait and when it came my turn the clerk asked me hold old I was I knew I must lie or go back home I did not want to go home so I lied to the clerk I told him I was 18 years old he did not ask me to swear to my age if he had I think I would have told him I could not do that

then it come Loneys turne the clerk ask him how old he was he said 18 the clerk looked at him from head to foot then he said my boy you wil haft to hold up your hand and swear that you are 18 years old poor Loney I wil never forgit the look on his face as his hand went up to take the oath he was a year older than I but not so large wel it was night when we got all the papers signed up so we went back to the eat counter and eat supper then went with a fue of our frinds to a Hotell Cincinnati house to stay all night it did seam so strange to me that the first time I ever slep a way from home that it would be in a hotell but Loney and I was glad to lay down for we wer verry both played out for we had went thru mor hard work that day than any other day of our lifes so we went to bed

I lay thar for a long time befor I went to sleep when I thought of what I had dun I felt proud in a way that I had carred out my plans ever thing had worked out as I had pland I think it was the first time I ever tryed to do my own thinking ever body at home was all ways telling me what to do but now I had broke away from all of that now I felt I would be free to some things my own way then I did realize that I would be helt responsible for my acts so I decided to hold my temper down and to hold my tongue that was not hard to do as I was not alowed to talk at home thay all dun all of my thinking and talking for me so I was a verry green and ignorant boy I did not know so much as a 10 year old boy dos now well I did a lot of thinking befor I went to sleep no doubt thar wer some moor coggeshalls that did not sleep that night poor Mother I went to sleep thinking of her what a hard time she all ways had with a verry large famley of 7 girls and for boys to look after and ever thing so unhandy in hous so after a long time I went to sleep the

sun was shining when I waked up in the morning It could not realize at first that I was in a hotel in Indianapolis what I had went thru yesterday seemed like a dream we got up and went down to the bar room we did not know what to do so we just watched the other men and did just like they did we found a place to wash hands and face and come over hair and then the bell for breakfast so we just followed the crowd and I came to a table I sit down at the end of the table

there was not a thing on the table to eat just dishes I wondered what they intended for us to eat I heard a woman say right behind me beef stake ham and eggs I did not know she was talking to me I looked around at her and she said the same words over again I did not know what to say so I just looked up at her and nodded my head and said yes the boys all laughed at me I was so plagued and so embarrassed that I wished I was back home I never felt so bad in all my life you see I was at the end of the table where the waiter started in to take orders I was the first one she came to and how could I know what to say or do the woman tuck pity on me and leaned over me and told me not to mind as she would fix it up so I could have the laugh on the rest of them

so she went to the one below me and said beef stake ham and eggs the man said beef stake and she went around to all of them some tuck beef stake and some ham and eggs so I knew what they all laughed at me for when I said yes it made me feel pretty weak to think how green I was it made me realize how little I knew about the world I resolve then and then to learn by watching others where ever I was the boys kept snickering at me and the more that they snickered the worse I felt but all ended when the waiter came in with our breakfast the waiter gave me beef stake ham and eggs while the others got just what they had ordered the waiter said now you boys that have been laughing so much will know after this how to order breakfast

well Loney and I had not passed thru our physical examination yet and Loney was very much down hearted for fear he could not pass we went to a large building and was taken in to a room where there was 2 Drs one of them was a very large man and a very pleasant one he told us to go in to a small room and take off all of our clothes then to come back to him when we got back he came up to me and run his hand up my back then he says to me my God boy what did you do yesterday that made you so hot and made you sweat so much I told him what we had done well he says I will tell you what you must do you must take a bath and get all of that old sweat off of your skin then he began to measure me all over then he made me run jump and hop he looked at my teeth and eyes then he said you are all right for a boy there is none better then he turned to Loney and when he got thru with him he told Loney he was pretty small but he would do on a pinch the Dr then gave us an order for our uniforms and told us to come back to him before we put them on

After taking a good bath we put on our uniforms and went in to an office where an officer gave us a written pass so we could go anywhere we wanted to go he also paid us \$70.00 in

green back money Loney and I went out on the streets of Indianapolis as Soldiers of the U.S. to look at the city it was a live place full of soldiers and people of all kinds the streets wer full of cabs busses and hacks of all kinds we wer going along Washington St. looking at all the wanders of the city then all at once somebody grabed me by the arm it was my old friend Dr Taylor he led me down an alley for half a block then he began to talk to me he said Rees you have played the game now I said whi what is the matter now wel he says you sprung a surprise on ever body around Willamburg and your Father and Mother are allmost sick over it and your mother sent me down hear to make you go back home and he says all the boys in the cuntry want to go to war now thay all want to git in the same company you ar in 3 or 4 came down on the same train with me

I asked who came he said Lute Cranor Andy Cranor and Johnney Davis I was glad to know the boys wer coming as thay had all belonged to the boy Company Dock told me he coud take me back home if I wanted to go I told him I would not go home at all Oh yes you must go home on a weeks furlough an see your folks and bid them goodbye so I promast him I would go if I coud git furlough I told him I did not know how Father would reseve me oh he said he wil talk a lot to you but he wil not try to keep you home unles you ask him to dock said he would see Cap Finney and tell him to get a weeks furlough for me and that he would look for me home the last of the week

Loney and I loked about town till night and then we found some of the older boys and we all went out to camp Cairington with them ther in a 40 acre pastur we seen about 100 barracks all in rows each barracks was 20 by 100 feet all along one side was sleeping bunks one above the other three deep on the other side was a table full lenth of the barracks the table 2 1/2 feet wide and joined up to the wall and high enuph to stand up to eat off of I was given a napsack with a wollen blanket a gum blanket and a part of a tent Loney and I made our bed in one of the bunks went to bed and to sleep for we wer verry tired the next morning I was up by daylight no one else was up it was cold so I seen a stove close to our bunk I thought I would make a fire I went out to look for wood and I coud not find a stick I found a saw but no wood while I was around I saw a man come out of the officerss barracks he ask me what I was looking for I told him I was looking for fire wood he was a very tall man had red hair and whiskers his beard was moor than a foot long he did not have an eney thing but a long night shirt and a pair of old slippers wel he say my boy you come with me and we wil find all the wood we want as we walked a long he told me his name was Dillon and that he was the Dr for the 57 then he ask me my name and what Company I belonged to I told him Company D wel he said you are in one of the best companys in the regiment you wil be taken care of thar you wil have good offisers over you we had to go 1/4 of a mile to get the wood it was 4 feet long I had to saw in too and split it I git the fire going I went for a bucket of watter washed my hands and face by that time the other boys wer up and 50 of us lined up along the table a man came

along and gave me a tin plate another one came along gave me a nife and fork a nuther a tine cup a nuther a slice of bread one inch thick 4 inch wide and 8 inches long a nother a slice fride salt pork about 4 inches squair and 1/2 inch thick a nuther filed the cup with strong coffee and a nother one came along with sugar for my coffee that was all I got for my brakefast.

what a contress thar was between this brakefast and what I had allways had at home but I felt better than I did at the Hotell when ever body laughed at me till I came near crying I coud not eat the salt pork at all but I did soak the bread in coffee and eat it then about a 100 of the 57 boys formed in line and marched out of at the gate Cap Finney ordered the gard to pass us out then Cap gave each of us a pass so we coud go eney place in town we broke ranks and started for the city when we got thar who should we meet John Davis Lute Cranor and his bother Andy John and Lute had on uniforms but Andy did not I ask him what was the truble he said he was rejected and he looke like he was redy to cry I was glad to see Johnney Davis he was a year older than I was we had all ways ben good friend he was a cuntry boy I told Johnney I wanted him to be my bunk mate he said all right thats just what I want

we stoped at lunch counter and I eat a nother brakefast I was so hungary I coud not wait till noon afternoon the 57 got orders to git redy to leve Indinaplas erley the next morning ever body was ordered to go to camp when we got thar Cap Finney came to me and told me to to hunt up all of the new recruits from Willamsburg and find out who wanted to go home on a weeks furlough I got the boys to gather and taked it over Loney did not want to go home Johnney Davis and Lute Cranor wanted to go bad and thay beged me to go with them I did not know what to do I wanted to go home yet I didnt want to go I told the boys I would let them know after a little while I hunted up Cap Finney and had a long talk with him he said to me Rees you must go home and see your folks you wil feel better in the years to come he says I know your Father wil be verry mad about it but he wil not dare say much to you

Wil I told Cap I would go to Willamsburg and if my folks ask me to come home I would go Cap and I went to Colonel Lenards office and I got furloughs for myself and John Davis and Lute Cranor for one week it was to late to git a train for Richmond that evening so we stayed at the barricks all night and got the 8 oclock train next morning for Richmond wher we found some Willamsburg folks who wanted us to ride home with them we wer glad for the chance to ride home befor I left Richmond I had my photograph taken the first I had ever had taken it was a verry good one looked just like I did that day then we wer off for Willamsburg and as we rode along the pike some of my thought wer verry sad for I knew the meeting with Father and Mother and the rest of the family would not be verry pleasant I resolved that Ide stay around with my friends till some of the famley sent for me to come home it was late when we got to Willamsburg the town looked so small

and quite to me yet it had a good look to me I had not ben in town long when Clint Edwards came to me and told me that ever body knew I was coming that evening and that he and his sisters wer haveing a party for me that night and all the boys and girls in town and cuntry would be thar that is all of the younger set of my age

it was the first party the younger set ever had I told Clint I would not go at all as I would not know how to act or what to talk a bout wel Clint said we wil just let the girls do all the talking and acting and we will have a good time with the boys and besides we wil have a grand big supper and then you are to stay all night with me I said all right Clint I wil be thar and Clint hurried away to help git redy for the party then old Dr Taylor seen me on the streat and came to me and told me that thar was some folks at his house that wanted to see me I ask him who thay wer he said come along you can see for yourself who thay are I thought it must be Mother and some of my sisters so I went home with him and when I got thar I did not see eney one but Mrs Taylor and little Kqte and Jimex

After we had taked a fue minutes I ask wher the folks wer that wanted to see me Mrs Taylor said God bless you Rees dont you call me and Kqtey and Jimex eney body whi she says no one felt as bad as we did when we heard you had gone to the war and it was me that made the Dr go down to Indinaplas after you and I was mad when he did not bring you back the idea of a kid like you going to war whi little Kqte says you should be spanked and made to stay at home and Jimex wants to go to war with you and says he wil run away and go to you when he gits big enuph

thay all wanted me to stay for supper I was told them I had an invitation to a party up at Edwards little Kqte wanted to know who I was going to take to the party I said no one oh I wish I was big enuph so you coud take me I told her I would take her if her Ma would let her go her mother said she was to young to go to partys whi Kqte said I am past 10 and I am a going if Rees will take me I told Mrs Taylor to let her and Jimex go as it was just a kids party eney way I tuck supper with the Taylors so I went with Kqte and Jimex Taylor to the first party I ever went to we found the Edwards house full of boys and girls the most of them wer younger than I was and had ben school mates of mine I injoyed the party verry much we played all kinds of games and I eat a nother supper the girls wer all young from 10 to 16 years and it was the first party for the most of them thay all wore hoops some so large thay looked like a walkin umberell the boys wer a little older from 12 to 18 years the hold crowd was a prety green set so I felt prety much at home with them

about mid night I tuck Kqte and Jimex home thay liked to have talked my head head off on the way home then I went back to Edwards to stay all night the Edwards house is just a cross the esley from Fathers house Clint and I wer just like brothers we wer all ways to gather when I was not at work we did a lot of talking after we went to bed Clint told me that he did not know what my Father and rest of the family thought of me for

going to war he said none of them would talk to him I did want to be friendly with them I wondered if they all felt I had disgraced the family if so I would not bother them if they wanted me to come home they will have to ask me and promise not to insult me in any way the next morning after we had breakfast Clint and I went down town with a few of the boys when I seen brother Melvin coming down the street

he came up to me he wanted to talk to me we went across the street and sit down on a box Melvin ask me why I did not come home that Mother was almost sick because I had joined the army will I says Mell what will Father do to me if I go home oh he says I do not know what he will do will I says Mell you and Lase must see that Father does not lay hands on me for I do not want to come in contact with him if he is fighting mad Mell says come along I do not think he will do any thing but talk a lot to you I went home with Mell

when I went in Mother came to me and put her head on my shoulder and cried wanted to know why I wanted to leave home and go to war I said Mother I can not stay here and never be allowed to go any place or dress like other boys I have stayed here now till I do not know how to act when out with other people so I am going where I will be as good as any other boy that I come in contact with but Mother I do not blame you one bit I hate to leave you you have been as good to me as you could be I sit down by the side of brother Mell

Father was walking the floor and he stopped in front of me said Alvarez why did you run away from home last Monday morning I said I could not have got a way any other way you would have stopped me if you had knew it he said how do you know what I would have done I said I have lived with you for 16 years and I think I know you pretty well will he said do you still want to go to war I said yes I do then he tells me he is done with me tells me to go on to the war and if you ever live to see the end of it stay away from here do not come to me for you have forfeited your right here then he left me and went out of the house and I did not see him for 2 years to talk to him

as I did not stay at home any of nights while I was at Williamsburg on my furlough I divided my time with young friends that was dinners and suppers and parties every day and night I would have enjoyed my furlough fine if the folks at home had treated me like all the neighbors did at home it was like being at a funeral they all seemed to have it in for me so I stayed away from that it made me feel bad every body good to me except my own folks the night before I was to leave for the battle field the boys of the old boy company met at Dr Taylors office and sent for me to come there I went in and the 4 boys that had talked so mean to me that Sunday evening come to and began to apologize and beg me to forgive them for the mean things they said to me they wanted to know how it came that I had changed my mind

I said I did not why they said you told us you was not going to war no I said I did not say that at all I told you I would not promise to go with you that is all I told you

boys I did not want eney one to know that I was a going to go to war and moor than that I did not want to influince eney of you boys to go or not to go you know that for I told you that evening Loney Marton told he was a going soon after you boys left me that evening then I told Loney I would go with him Bill Duke ask me if I thought he should go to the arme I said no not unless you want to go off and leve that old crippled father of yours starve you know he neads you to help to feed that family of small children

Bill Duke came up to me tuck me by the hand and said God bless you Rees for saying that for I was a frade you would think I was a dam coward if I did not go after I had talked to you the way I did to you that Sunday evening Dr Taylor came in and gave him \$40.00 told him to keep if for me and if I git sick I will want you to come to me he said he would just let me know if you need me and I wil come but Rees you know enuph to take care of your self I said I have found out that I do not know eney thing at all wil dock said that is moor than eney of thos boys have ever found out you have made a good start I have faith in you Rees you wil come out all write in the end goodby I bid the boys goodby then I bid Mrs Taylor Kgte and Jimey goodby

I left Williamsburg with Lute Cranor and Johney Davis and a fue of the boys from around town when I got to Richmond I went to see sister Eviline she was working thar at the time she talked so good and kind to me that I broke down and cryed and she wanted to know what I was crying about I said Evei you are the first one of our famley that has giv me eney sympathy thay all act like thay are mad at me she said Rees thay are not mad at you thay are just afrade of Father that is all thar is to it she said you are a brave good boy and I bleve in you and I bleve you wil come back some day and be a real good man she went to the station with me and as the trane roled away that I was on she was standing on the platform waveing hankerchief at me and it made me feel good to be treated that way by one of my own famley

wel I stayed in Indinaplas 2 or 3 days then one night we got on a freight train with 1000 other boys and men and started for Nashville Tenn we got to Louisville Ky the next day noon thar we got our dinner and waited till near night befor we got another train while we was waiting for trains I sit down on a pile of lumber by myself and was thinking of home and friends when a little girl came to me and ask me what I was thinking of I told her I was thinking of home and friends she was about 12 or 13 years old she said I wish I could go away from home to oh she said thay are mean to me thay make me sell 10 pints of licker ever day or go without supper at night I ask her wher she got the licker to sell she said her father run a saloon and made her go out and peddle it on the streets so she ask me to buy a bottle of her I said no I did not drink whisky she said she wished I would take a bottle as she was giting tired of carrying it around

I said I do not see eney she pulled up her top skirt and thar around her waist was a lether belt that had 6 bottles of whisky hanging to it I said if your dady makes you sell

whisky that way he is a bad man and I would like to give him a good licking she said if she was a boy she would run away and joyne the arme my train was now redy to start I looked up the boys and we got aboard the train and started for Nashville Tenn we had not slep eney the night befor and wer giting pretty sleepey thar was not eney thing in the car just a empty freight car thar was 25 or 30 of us in each car 30 or 35 cars in the train in the day time thar would be a lot of the boys clime out on top of the car that would make moor room in the car for thoes that was left in the car but at night we all made our beds on the floor one blanket under us one to cover us no stov or eney thing else for heating (?) * and we war packed in thar like sardines in a tin can wel if one can lay on the floor of an old freight car and sleep with the train at a speed of 40 miles per hour he must be some sleepey for as you lay thar with your head on the floor you can hear verry plane the click click of the car wheel as it rooled from one rail to the other

wel as we had not slep the night befor we soon went to sleep and never waked til sunup next morning and the train pulled in to a little town and all the old woman in the town came over to the train with baskets of cakes pie and boiled eggs I bought a dryed apple pie and tryed to eat it but it was so tough a dog could not bite it so when the train started out some of the boys snatched a basket of boiled eggs from the old woman so we had eggs for brakefast and that was all we had we pulled in to Nashville just befor noon wer taken to the zolicoffer house it was the largest house I had ever seen it was 7 storys high had 365 rooms in it had just ben put up by a reble general zolicoffer and had not ben finished inside yet we wer put in the top story the house was full from top to bottom moor than 4000 soldier in it thar I was with all of thoes men and boys and I did not know but 2 of them Lute Cranor and John Davis and thay wer all just as green as I was we wer put in to a room with 12 or 15 other soldiers in it we wer afrade to all leve the room at the same time for fear that our things would be taken so one of us stand gard while the other 2 would look around

we had to go down to the ground floor for our meals bread pork and beans and coffee thar was gards all over the big dining room thay did not permit eney one to speke a word while thay wer eating wel I stayed on gard while Lute and Joney went to dinner when thay came back thay told me that thar was not much left down thar as thay had not got half enuph so when I went down I had to wait a long time befor I was allowed to go in the dining room and thar was not much on the table to eat the waitters wer all soldiers and I knew one of them so as he past me I called his name he came up to me I stuck out my hand and said how do you do Cragg he said how in the devel are you I told him I was a Willamsburg boy wel he says I think I know ever body in Willamsburg but I be damed if I know you whats your name I told him Coggeshall wel he said it is not Lufe and is not Melvin and that is all thar is big enuph to go to war

I said you have forgotten Rees he looked me over then said my God Rees you have grode a foot in 2 years and he tuck me by the arm and led me back to the kitchen I eat

*lleaing interpreted as heating

dinner with him thar and I had a plenty of good fride side meat beans fride potatos black burry pie Cragg had ben in the arme for 2 years and had ben detailed as a cook in the zolicoffer house he told me to come and eat with him ever time I said he would watch for me at meal time I told him thar was 2 other boys with me from Willamsburg he ask me who thay wer I said Lute Cranor and John Davis wel he says Johney is all right but I wil not give Lute a dam mouth full to eat he said I do not like that boy a little bit I wanted to pay him for my dinner he said Rees you could not eat enuph in a month to pay for all the wattermillons I have stold out your dady patch you and Johney come eat with me while you are in this hotell I told Cragg I felt that I was a luckey boy to meet up with a good friend like him he says oh Rees it dont cost me a dam cent wel I went back up to the boys I made up my mine not to tell Lute Cranor eney thing about what I had seen but I told Johney when supper time came I told Lute to go down and git his supper and Johney and I would stand gard when Lute came back grumblng about the supper he got he said bread pork and beans is all thay have at this hotell then Johney and I went down and the same gard was thar that was thar at noon he passed Johney and I in and told me to take my friend on to the kitchen when we got thar Cragg had supper for us and it was a good one we then went back to our room and Lute said it did take us a long time to eat poor Lute had to suffer becace Cragg did not like him wel we got prety tired of staying in that large house so the next day we got one of the men in our room to watch our things while we all three went down to the grand floor we could not get out unless some offoser passed us out while we wer standing around an offoser came down with a squad of about a 100 men and boys

thay formed in line in the long hall to march out with the offoser at the head of the squad thay wer leving for the frunt and we fell in to the ranks of the squad and marched out with them and when we got out side we left them and went up town the city was patroled by soldiers so we had to keep a look out for them for we had no pass and would be arrested and locked up so we kep out of thar sight we went to the statehouse and went up to the top of this dome wher we could look over the city and the country for miles and miles it was a verry prity seen we cut our name on the verry top of dome wel we began to wander how we would git back in the Zolicoffer house

we had no pass and no offarser to pass us in Johney wanted to buy some shoulder strips and put on me and make an offiser of me so I could pass us all in I said no I will not try eney thing like that so we went on down the street I was looking a cross the street I thought I seen an offiser that I knew go in to an office I told the boys to stop and stay thar till I come back I in a cross the street in to the office and thar stood lieutenant Jess Cates I called him by name he did not know me at first he belonged to 69th Ind regiment and had been home on a furlough and was on his way back to regiment I ask him if he would go down to the Zolicoffer house with me he said yes Rees I will do eney thing I can for you

so he went across to wher the boys wer with me when the boys saw me with an offiser thay begant to grin from year to year Cates new the goys well and wanted to know what he could do for us so I told him we wer out and wanted in but had no pass

he said allright boys come along I wil put you in to the Hotell we wer very glad to git back it was a good streke of luck that I saw Jess Cates he saved us from giting in to the gard house

I do not remember just how long we wer at Nashville I think it was about a week one evening an offiser came thru all the rooms calling for the 57 Ind boys and also for a number of other regments to report down on the ground floor in the hall at 10 oclock we left Nashvill at mid night on a freight train for Chattanuga Tenn wher we was to wait for our regment witch was marching thru from Nashvill to Chattanuga we did not git to see much of the cuntry from Indinaplas to Nashvill as we traveled in the night the most of the way so we wer moor than half way to Chattanuga at sunup the next morning when we looked out we seen the mountains of Tenn and by noon we had passed around the end of lookout mountain and then in to Chattanuga we left the train on the west side of town and marched thru the town and up on top of a hill on the east side

we wer given a suply of fat pork beans sugar coffee crackers and rice we wer told to put up our tent as we would be thar for a fue days till our regment got in from Nashville we eat a dinner of our own cooking for the first time we wer a little chivary about it but we eat it just the same we wer on the west side of the high hill near the top the city lay in the valley be low us we could look over and beyond the city and see that grand old lookout mountain looming up like a grate black cloud it was 3 or 4 miles away from the city and in the valley between the city and mountain was that grand arme of Shermans that was soon to be put in motion tents ever wher as for as the eye could see it was a grand sight for me I looked and looked till I had the headache we put up our tent went to bed and to sleep in the night it rained so hard that the watter came down the hill run thru our tent till we wer laying in 3 inches of watter

we got as wet as a drownded rat the next day the sun came out nice and warm and we layed our things on the grass to dry then we dug a ditch around our tent so the watter would not run under our tent the evening befor I left Nashvill I bought 10 plugs of tobacco gave \$5 for them 50¢ each so now I ask Johnney Davis to go with me and help me sell them we went over to a large camp not far from town and in little time I had sold the 10 plugs for \$10 Johnney wanted me to go right back to Nashville and git moor tobacco that 10 dollars was all the money I had now with me

wel the next day the old 51 Ind regment came marching up the hill and I was glad to see them it was good to see and talk with some one we knew thar was 16 of us all from Willamsburg Anderson Davis Asher Perce Harv Yellvantion Bob Martain John McCarthy Amos Verl Johnney Mullin Billey Mullin Joe Boyed Matt Ballenger All

Chamlis Johnney Hull of the old soldiers and Lute Cranor Johnney Davis Loney Martain Marion Cook and Alvarez Coggeshall of the new recruits

the older boys were verry good to the young recruits thay learned us how to cook and do meney other things thay wer verry much surprised to see me as did not think my Father would let me come the old boys all wanted to know how I left the folks at Williamsburg and I delivered meney kind loving mesage to them from thar folks the next day was clean up day I did some washing I was given an old gun it had to be cleaned up it had a load in it and I was afrade to shoot it off for fear it would burst so I went down to the river and got up to a tree and helt the gun around on the other side and pulled the trigger and it made a noise like a cannon I got ever thing cleaned up in prety good shape by night

the next day was inspection day Cap Finney came along told what we wer to take on the march 1/2 tent one wool blanked one gum blanket and a change of shirts and drawers one napsack one haversack one small portfolio one frying pan one cup one knife and one fork one gun and cartridge box with 40 rounds of cartriges I found it was hevey enuph when I got on the march the next day that grand arme of Shermans began to move I wish I was able to picture the seen in and around Chattanooga Tenn that last week of April 1864 column after column of troops of calvarey and infintry long wagon trains with thar white covers some of them loaded with arme suplys and pontoon briges and the field artillery with moor than 1000 cannons all of this large arme of Shermans move east and south east over the battle ground of Chickamauga the stars and stripes was waveing at the head of ever troop the bugle sounding the call to arms the drum coor was beating the long roll bands wer playing and the engine shrill whistel as thay came in with long trains loaded with soldiers

from the top of the hill where I was I coud see all of this grand panorama I would stand for hours and look and watch the troops disapear over the top of mishnary ridge that was 60 years ago and in my mind I can still see that grand sight I can see Genrl W T Sherman and staf of body gards go by I can not tell one half of what I saw thar the 57 regiment was consined to the second brigade second division forthe arme corps arme of the Cumberland

I think it was the first of May that we started on the march for the battle field near Ringgold george we marched out over Missinary Ridge wher thar had ben a grate battle fought just five months befor and a long the road as we went up the ridge I seen meney graves wher the dead lay buryed and the hevey rains of the winter had washed the dirt off the graves I coud see parts of the corps sticking out of the grave it did make the cold chills run up and down my back to look at them befor noon I got so tired I would hav giv out if the old boy had helped me one of them tuck my gun one my napsack one my haversack and I just walk a long with out eney load at all when we stoped for dinner I was so tired and hungre I coud eat my hard crackers and fat salt pork and was glad to git

after a rest of an hour we went marching on I got along better in the after noon I did

not git so tired and when we stoped at sundown we wer in 20 miles of the rebbs at Ringgold hear the old boys helped us put up our tent and then after supper Cap Finney came to me and asked if I would be a frade to go on picket gard that night I told him I was not afrade he said he thought it would be better for me to go on now befor we got up to the rebbs so I went out with about a 100 other boys and we formed a line of gards around the regiment out about 20 rods from the regiment I went on gard at 9 oclock and was on till eleven oclock I was in the woods close to meadow thar was a gard on each side of me about 5 rods from me

we wer not aloud to talk to each other or to sit down just stand thar and keep a look out and it was so dark I could not see 10 feet from me so I had to use my ears I had not been on gard moor than a half hour when Mart Ballenger one of the Willamburg boys a friend of mine come out to me and stayed with me till 11 oclock he said he thought I mite git lonesome or that I mite go to sleep I said Mart it is good of you to think of me in that way I went to camp at 11 oclock and lay down with my cloths on and slep till 2 oclock when the corporal of the gard come and waked me and I went back on gard and not long after corporal left me that I heard a noise over in the meadow I thought it sounded like a calveryman savor rattling against his saddle my heart stoped beating for a minute I thought the rebbs wer coming the noise would stop a little bit and then I would hear it againe it was so dark I could not see a rod a head of me I never was so bad scared in all my life but when daylight come I looked over in the middow and thar was an old mule with a chane hanging to his halter and as he moved around eating grass the chane would rattle and make the noise that frightened me so bad

when I went to camp the boys all wanted to know how I liked to stand gard I told them about the old mule and thay all thought that was a good joke on me that was the first and the last time I ever had to stand gard as I was promoted to corporal in a short time after that and a corporal is not required to go on gard wel we started our march agane and by noon we came to a large Privit park and we camped in the park for the rest of the day and that night thar was a large house in the center of the park thar wer about 40 acres in the park with all kinds of trees growing in it and 25 or 30 springs of watter at regler intervalles thru out the park

each spring was walled up with stone with a stone arch over it and the name of spring was placed on it thar was the blue the red yellow green and black then thar was the sweet the blitter the sower and I do not remember the names of half of them I tryed the watter in all of them I think the watter in them was all just a like I think this place a fake health resort I think this place was called Rock springs it was not far from Ringgold

the next morning we pulled out for Ringgold wher we reserved 3 days supply of grub we could hear the faint report of guns further south wher the cavalry had found the rebs and we knew Shirmans arme was giting redy to fight the first fighting I seen was at Tunnel hills a

small range of mountains called Buzzard roost it was a long narrow mountain laying north and south it was 200 feet high and verry steep and hard to clime our skirmish line and cavalry had drove the rebs off of the north end of mountain and the 57 regiment was sent on top to suport the skirmish line

when we got on top we found it narrow and so rough that it was all we could do to find a place to stand the rebbs wer some 1/4 mile south of us but between us was a deepe cut or revene a cross the mountain it was a hot day thar was no watter up thar I was sent with 6 other boys to the bottom of the mountain wher thar was a spring to git watter each boy had 6 canteens it made a hevey load to clime the mountain with while I was climbing the mountain I see 200 men pulling a canon up the mountain with a long rope when thay git to the top thay begin to fire at the rebs then the rebs charges a cross the revene and tuck the canon from our men and started a cross the revene with it when thay got the bottom of revene thay had to leve it thar it was just between us and the rebs neather one of them could go a near it fought over it till night thar was no one killed in the 57 reg one wounded and it was not bad

from wher we were we could look down on the east side of the mountain and see the fighting down in the valley it was a grand sight to see our line of battle advancing and driving back the rebs as thay advanced we stayed a top the mountain all night I made my bed on a big flat rock and went to sleep we were up by daylight and the rebs wer gone and we started on the march we past thru the litlle village of Dalton and on south till we came to a large creek thar we went in to camp we had a swim and a bath I tryed to wash a brown muslin shirt one that mother had giv me when I left home it was verry dirty I used up near all the soap I had and the moor I washed the worse it looked so I threw it in the creek I stood on the bank and watched it float down the creek I wandered what mother would think if she could look a way down thar and see me throwing a way the shirt she giv me

I did hate to see it go but it was so hard to keep clene I had one moor just like it that I had never wore I was puting it on when Dr Dillon came a long he knew me he took me by the hand and asked me if I was the boy that helped him carry wood early one morning at camp carington I told him I was he said where did you git that shirt I told him my mother gave it to me well he said you have a good mother but she dos not know what kind of shirt a soldier should have I told him I just threw one in the creek he said you did right to git rid of it he told me to come up and see him after supper he wanted to help me git better shirts after supper I went to regementile head quarters and Col. Leenard gave me 2 goverment shirts thay wer lite gray and part wool and easy to wash the next day we came in contact with the rebbles near Resace in the noon the 57th was ordered to support a battry of 6 guns that was located on a small hill we marched up in front of the guns and lay down flat on the ground and the canons would shoot over us we had to put our

fingers in our eares the noise was so grate and the concusion so strong it would allmost lift us off the ground ever time the 6 guns would fire and was ever minute we had not been thar long when the rebs began to shell us the shells were buresting in the air all around us our col was on his horse just behind the battry he was killed by a pece of shell I hapen to look back and seen him fall from his horse we all felt so bad about his death he was a good offiser and was loved by all that knew him about this time the reble were nocked out by our battry

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andr ordered to the frunt to releve our skirmished that had on the battle frunt we wer ordered to charge the rebels brest works we went on the rim across a field but when we got to the rebles works thay wer emty the rebs had gone we did not see them eney moor that day but the next day noon we found them close up to Resace in the woods the 57th had ben supporting the skirmish line all morning about one p m we wer laying down flat on the ground on the side of a hill wher thar wer a lot of flat stone I sit some of them up in frunt of my head a man by my side made fun of me for puting the ston in frunt of my head and in a verry short time he was hit in the head by a reble bullet and killed him instantly to see the blood spurting from his head I felt sick and fainty but at that verry moment we had orders to charge the rebs and as I got in motion the sickness left me

we started on the run thru the wood we past our skirmish line kep right stratte on the reble bullets flying thick all around me all of a sudden the rebs disappeared behind thar brest works with was covered over with green brush with the leafs on it witch made it look like a thicket of under brush I could see the smoke of thar guns when thay fired at us that wer all I could see the rebs was pouring volley after volley in to our ranks with deadley affect we had to stop and hunt cover behind a log stump tree or big rock or eney thing that would stop a reble bullet

I stoped with 3 other boys behind a large tree I soon discovered the tree would not cover all 4 of us I told the boys I was going to a nuther tree about 2 rods to the frunt of us but all of them told me not to do that but to stay with them but I felt I would be safe if I had a tree all to my self I left the boys and run to the other tree I had just got thar when I heard one of the boys yell with pain I looked around I seen Enos Veal runing to the rear one of his arms was hanging limber at his side and the blood runing from it

I had no time to watch eney one I went to loading a shooting as fast as I could I could see the smoke of the rebs guns when thay would fire at me that was all I could see to shoot at the rebs soon located me and began to shoot at me that made me hug the tree prety close for the bullets began to spatter against the tree on all sides except the side I was on I had not ben shooting but a little bit I heard a yell at the tree behind me I looked back



"in a short time I saw
a man on a horse coming as fast
as he could and as he went by me
he threw a little sack of 100 rounds
of cartridges.... I knew what it was
to be a soldier"

and seen Billy Meullin trying to crawl back to the rear he had been shot in the knee joint 2 men runing to him and layed him on a stratcher and carried him off the battle ground that left onley one of the 3 boys to hold the tree behind me and he got a frade and started to run to the rear and was hit in the hip and went down and had to be carried off of the field

that left no one behind me at all I was the onley one to hold a space of 5 or 6 rods and the rebs concentrate thar attack on me I fired my gun so fast that it got so hot I could harley hold it in my hands and while I was standing with my side to the tree I had my haversack on my back it was full of grube I was loading my gun and I must have steped back a little and the rebs seen my haversack thay must have thought it was my head for thay shot at it and the bullet cut both straps and let my haversack fall to the ground that thru me out of ballance I tried to catch my self caught my foot on gun and fell flat on the ground I got up about as quick as I went down when I got up I had a bullet in my left hand so I though I had put the powder in the gun gefor I fel down I ramed the bullet down and fount that I had no powder in the gun and I had no way to git the bullet out thar I was with out a gun that I could shoot

I was in an offull fix I was so hot not a dry stitch on me I did not want to leve the tree I did not know what to do I looke back at the tree wer the other boys had ben I saw a gun laying on the ground whar one of the boys had left it I run back and got the gun than back to my tree as I had left haversack I went to shooting as fast as I could till my amminition was all gone then I lay down behind the tree to rest the rebs must have seen me lay down for the lead bullets hit the roots of the tree all around me one ball hit my shoe heel and knocked it off slick and clean so I got up and stood as close to the tree as I could to keep from being hit while I was standing thar the reble balls made the bark fly off the tree

in a short time I saw a man on a horse coming as fast as he coud and as he went by me he threw a little sack of 100 round of cartradges I then made the rebs lay low for the rest of the evening I was on the firing line at 2 pm was thar tile 8 pm and fighting ever minute I knew what it was to be a soldier I never worked harder in my life I went to the rear with the regiment we went in to camp near a stream whar I got a good cold drink of watter tuck a bath got supper and then it began to rain verry hard and the ground was soon covered with watter I was tired I was redy to drop but thar was no place to sit or lay down I borrow a hatchet cut green pine brush made a pile of it layed down on it with my gum blanket over me I soon went to sleep never waked up tile the light of day

I got up at once thar was one other man an old soldier by the name of Bill George I told him I was going out to the frunt to see if the rebs was thar yet he said he would go with me we went to the tree I had stood behind the pickit gard was thar he told us the rebs had left about mid night I told the gard that I stood behind that tree yesterday from 2 to 8 oclock and had fired 140 rounds of amination well he says that is a strange circumstance

for I have just counted the places wher this tree was hit by reble bullets and thar is 140 just as meney as you fired at the rebs he said look at both sides of this tree you wil see that the rebs did a cross fire on you both from the right and the left

Bill and I went over to the rebs work thar was no sign of the rebs thay had pulled out in the night thar works wer all covered over with green bush one would not know that thar was eney works thar untill he got right up to them we were looking around to see what was thar I was a little ahead of Bill and as we past around a tree top that lay on the ground I saw a mans leggs sticking out of the brush I says Bill hear is a dead reb Bill said yes I sopose he was hit and then craweld under thar to die poor cus his trubles are all over with and give the rebs foot a kick and we found the reb verry much a live for he jumped up and I think he was the worst scared man I had ever seen Bill and I had our guns with us we made him lay down flat of his back I stood gard over him while Bill looked around to see if thar was eney moor rebs thar the prisoner told me he had not slep eney for 2 nights and he had layed down thar the evening befor and slep so sound that he did not know when his regiment had marched away he belonged to 6th George regiment as we coud not find eney moor rebs thar we took our prisnor to regimentle headquarters Major Blanch in command of the regement cence Col Leonards death Major Blanch told me to take Prisnor to Brigade headquarters when I got thar Genarl Wagner was up and out in frunt of his tent he asked me wher I got that reble bird I told him wher and he wanted to know when I did that I told him all about it well he says you did wrong to go over to frunt with out orders he said I do not know what should be done with you for doing a trick like that he says how long have you ben in the arme I said 30 days wel he said you have a lot to learne yet now he said go back to your company and if you have eney trouble let me know of it and I wil help you if I can

when I got back to the company John Davis and Leoney Martain came to me and asked me whi I did not let them know that I was going to catch rebles that thay would have helped me I told them thay wer sleeping to good to be waked

after we had brakefast we called up in line and Cap Finney told that Gen Wagner was a going to organize a company of 100 men to be knowen as the Pioneer Company of the sec Brigade sec Division Forth Corps and as thar was 4 regments in the brigade it would take 25 men from each regiment Cap told us that general Wagner wanted volunteers for this work Cap told us the men in a Pioneer Company would be called on to build bridges over small streams fix road wher needed build skirmish pits after night after Cap had explained the matter to us he said all of those that wanted to volunteer step to the frunt one space not a man stepped out Cap was verry much taken back at that he did not know what to do well he says are you all afrade you will haft to work a little when said that I stepped to the frunt and said I am not afrade to work Cap came up to me and ask me if I knew what I would haft to do I told him all I knew was what he had told the company just now well Rees he

says you have put the older boys to shame to do this with out knowing what wil be called on to do I said I willing to all I coud wel he said sounds good and I bleve you are just the boy for that kind of work then Mart Ballenger steped up by my side and told Cap he would go with me Mart was 6 or 7 years older than I was and had seen 2 years service in the 57th I had all ways knew him as his fathers farm joined my father farm at Williamsburg

Cap wrote something on paper gave it me told Mart and I to report to regementle headquarters and for me to give the note to major Blanch when we got to regementle headquarters the men from the other Companys wer all thar and wer all ordered to report to Brigade headquarters we wer just redy to start and I said hold on a little I have something hear for the Major and I pulled the paper out of my pocket and gave it to Major Blanch he looked at the note then he looked at me and said you are a smart boy whi did you not give me the note as soon as you came hear I told him I had forgot it wel he said how long have you ben the arme I said a month wel he said I will excuse this time but after this when you a note for an offercir giv it to him as soon as you can then he ask me wher it was that he had seen me I said this morning what he says are you the boy that got up befor daylight and caught a reb befor sunup I told him I was the boy wel he said you are all right and I will do all I can for you he then wrote a note and put it with the one I had giv him and handed them to me and told me to giv them to gen Wagner when I got to brigade headquarters then he told me how to salute an offiser

wel when we got to brigade headquarters I went strate up to gen Wagner and saluted him and gave him the note he read the note and then called to two offisers and gave them orders to organize the 100 men and to have one corporal to ever 8(?) men and to make young Coggeshall one of the Corporals and from that day on I served as corporal while I was in the arme all tho I did not git my certificate of appointment for near a year from that date the company was organized with 85 Privates 10 Corporals 3 Sergents one Captain one lieutenant one half of Company would work at a time unless thar was somthing verry urgent then we would all work

the Company was called on at once to repair a road so the ambulance coud take our wounded back to the R road by noon we had the road in fair shape we went into camp near the road and the ambulance began to go by with the wounded we wer eating dinner when I heard some one call my name I look up at the ambulance that was passing and I saw Enos Veel one of his arms was gone he said oh Rees for God sake give me some meat I am starveing for meat I grabed my haversack and ran along the side of the ambulance I took from my haversack all the meat I had about one pound of fat pork just as I gave it to him I heard some one say Coggeshall I looke back and seen Dr Dillon on a horse he came trotting up to me and ask me what it was I gave the man in the ambulance I told him I gave him a pece of fat meat well he says you must not do that eney moor for it is the worse thing a wounded man can eat whi he says your generosity my kill that man if he eats it all at one

time so I ran as fast as I could to over take the ambulance that Veel was in when I came up with it Veel was eating the meat as fast as he could I told him what the Dr said he Veel said he was not afrade to eat all of it and moor if he could get it Dr Dillon came up just then and tuck the meat from him and gave it back to me then dock got off of his horse and walked back to camp with me he told me the 57th had lost 20 killed and 60 wounded and about 20 of the wounded would die he thought dock told me he was glad I had joined the pioneer co he said you wil not haft to go on the skirmish line in the day time and at night thar is not so much danger he said I heard how you did yesterday and I bleve it was just luck that you cam out a live then that trick of yours this morning of bringing in alive reble befor sunup he says you must not do a rash act like that eney moor then he told me if I wanted to see him eney time I should come to Brigade headquarters as he was Brigade Dr now it made me feel proud to now I had a friend in Dr Dillon for he was a noble man and he proved to be a friend in deed for the time came when I needed a friend and he did not fail me

the next day the 57 regiment got our mail the first we had cence we left Chatanooga I got a letter from sister Kate and one from sister Eviline Kate was in Henrey County Ind at the time she wrote but was going home in a fue days she wrote me a verry nice letter full of cheer and sisterly love it made my heart glad to read it Evilins was a verry nice letter she told me she would expect me to come marching home when the war was over with honor perched on my shoulder and a lot of other stuf like that I was so poor a scholor I could not read the letters for a long time I went out in the woods and sit down by a tree and studyed the letters till I made out what wer in them then asked myself how I would answer them for I had never wrote a letter that eney body could read in all my life oh how glad I would have ben to have ben able to write them and tell them all I had seen and dun cence I left home I did try to write but I could not tell much and what I did write I was almost ashame to send to them and I knew that thay would have hard work to read them

the next day we were on the march a gaine and it was fight along the line some place ever day we did not do much hard fighting for sevarl days in our part of the battle line witch was 20 miles long we did a lot marching and counter marching trying to find the rebs and after we had found them it would take all day to git redy to fight and then we would that the rebs had sliped out in the night and destroyed all the bridges across the streams and that ment moor work for the Pioneer Co to replace them so the days and weeks went by with out much variation in them with the Cannon balls and shells and the bullets whistling over our head ever day

we passed new hope church wher we had a little fight the rebs had got in to large log barn and we could not dislodge them tile our artillery came up with 6 guns of 24 Pounders fired on the barn and rebs went out like bees out of a hive that all the live ones did and we never knew how meney wer killed as the barn burned down befor we got thar we kep

working our way South slowly step by step a constant skirmishing ever day we had past thru Dallas Allatona Bigshant (?) I do not remember how long it had taken us to do all this but I think it was a month or moor the rebs did not make a permanent stand tife thay got to 3 mountains that looked like 3 huge hay stacks from wher we wer some 10 or 12 miles a way south the name of the mountains wer Pine Lease (?) and Kenesaw but wer generaly spoken of as Kenesaw mountains hear the rebs has prepaired for battle thay had made a lot of forts on top of the 3 mountains and as the 3 mountains wer clos togather about 1/4 mile between them it looked like a hopeless job to dislodge them

it was hard to get close up to them in the day time so we had to slip up in the night as clos as we coud and dig skirmish pits on the side of the mountain I think it was a mile from bottom to the top of eney of the 3 mountains we had got around on the south side of Pine mountain had been thar 3 or 4 days and had got half way up the mountain one morning Gen Wagner came to see the Pioneer co we had been working all night makeing pits up on the side of mountain my 8 men wer all asleep I was cooking a kittle of beans for our mess when the Gen road up to our camp witch was down in the valley in the thick woods he said hellow Corporal how meney skirmish pits did you make last night I told him I had put up two while we wer talking my captain came up and Gen Wagner git off of his horse and sit on a log between me and Cap and told us thar would be a battle the next day and that he wanted 10 pits made as close to the top of the mountain as we coud put them he said the 8 men that puts a pit the closes to the top will git a leaf from duty for 5 days he says I want it don to night for them rebles must come down to morrow now he said wake your men at noon and git everthing redy for the night then he turned to me and ask me what he coud do for me I told him I wanted a pack mule to carrie our tools for us as thay got pretty hevey on a long march he told me he would see that I got one in a verry fue days he then left us

at noon we eat our pork and beans then we went to work to git everthing redy to put our skirmish pit at night we cut down some tall Pine trees about a foot in diamiter cut them in to 16 foot lenthis it would take 6 of them to make one skirmish pit 3 on each wing thay wer cut to fit togather like the corner of a log house onley it would not be as sharp an angle to the corner as a log house would have so the distance from the end of one wing to the end of the other wing would be about 24 feet and cover 24 men in dual file the 12 men in the frunt rank would fire at the enemy and step back and then rear rank would step up and fire while the first ones would reload and repeat over and over by so doing coud keep up a study fir eney lenth of time our pits wer placed about 4 rods apart so the 10 pits the Co was to put up would extend 40 rods along the side of the mountain

wel by 4 pm I had my logs all cut and fit gather redy to be carried up the mountain when it got dark enuph the rebs coud see us I told the 8 men under me to go back to camp and eat supper and git all the rest thay coud as we would go to work about 10 or 11 oclock I went with our Captain to see the place I was expected to put my pit I had put up one pit the

night befor and one one the night befor that the last one I put up was about 6 rods a head of the other Cap and I got as far as the first pit and thar stoped and lay down in the pit with the men that was on the reserve Skirmish line the reble bullets was singing thru the air and we desided it was not safe to go eney further Cap told me I was to put the next pit a bove the one I had put up last night except I was to move to the right 4 rods my pit was on the extream right of our brigade the (second) the third brigade joined ours on the right Cap and I looke around and got our bearings as best we coud then we crawled back down the mountain to our camp the men had eat supper and wer laying down and wer a sleep I eat and was soon a sleep while the cannons wer booming and the air was full of smoke of burnt Powder

we got up at 10 o clock and began to carrie the logs up mountain it was hard work the green Pine logs wer so hevey that 8 men coud not carrie them moor than a fue rods at a time I got 4 men from the reserve skirmish pit to help us so we got along fine and had all the logs to the place I wanted to make the pit some 8 or 10 rods further up the mountain than the last one we had put up it was verry dark and no one was aloued to speak above a whisper it was verry slow work till we got all the logs sit up in thar proper place then all 9 of us got in behind our logs with spades picks and shovels I had a little ax to cut roots with we dug out all the space between the two wings of the pit 2 to 3 feet deep and piled the dirt over on the out side of the logs it made a verry safe place to be when the batlle was on the next day

as soon as we got the pit completed I went back to our other pit below us and got 24 men and led them up to the new pit thay came one at a time about 10 feet apart in a little while after that the cloweds broke away a little the moon came up and I coud see a head a little at times so I poked my head above the logs a little I saw wher 2 large trees had been uprooted some time by a storm one of them had fell across the other in such a maner that it would make a good skirmish pit the logs lay some 3 or 4 rods futher up the mountain I thought if I coud build a nuther pit far up the mountain we would git the 5 days off of duty I told my men what I had seen thay wer all willen to go with me to see what we coud so we started to crawl out to the logs

I tuck the lead it became dark agane I crawled and crawled till I began to think I had missed the logs but at last I came to them and I found we coud make a good pit thar in a verry short time one that would hold a 100 men so we all to work with a will for we felt we would be the closes to the top of the mountain so we made the dirt fly over the log, one of the logs lay a cross the other and was helt up off of the ground about 2 feet it became necessary some one to git over on the outside of the log to shove the dirt back under the log no one wanted to go over the log so thay said for me to let the 8 men drawcuts told me to git 7 long sticks and one short and the man that got the short one would go over the log and do the work I tol the men I would git 9 little stick as I was a going to be in the game so I got 8 long and one short and told the men to draw first the men all drawed thar a long stick and left me the short one so I grabed a shovel

over the log I went and began to shovel the dirt up under the log I all most got thru with the job when I was fired on by a reb not moor than 40 feet from me I was not hit but it nearley scared the life out of me I jumped over the log and we all lay verry stile for a little while we did not hear eney thing moor of the rebs the moon came out a little I looked over the log and thar not moor than 30 or 40 feet in frunt of us stood a large tree and I coud the shadow of a man that shot at me he must have shot at the sound of the shovel as I worked for it was so dark I coud not see the tree when the moon was not shineing,

in a little while we crawled back to the pit wher the gards wer below us then on down to the reserve thar I met the offiser of the gard he told me he had inspected the other 9 pits and was waiting for me to report I told him my pit was redy for inspection so I went up the mountain with him to show him what I had dun when he got to first pit he told me it was a splendid pit and he bleved it was a close to the top of the mountain as eney if not closer I told him I had a nuther pit futher up yet but I did not know as he would except it wel he says show me the pit and I will soon tell you about that I told him to have the corparl of the gard to go with us and I would take him up to the other pit but you will haft to git down and crawl like a snake or the rebs will git you after we got to the frunt pit he told me it was all right and as good a pit as thar was on the line so we crawled back to the other pit then he told the Corporal to take his 24 men up to the frunt pit and he would send some moor men to take thar place in that pit I then went back to the reserve with offiser of the gard that I found my men waiting for me the offiser told us we wer entitle to the 5 days off of duty then he gave me a note to Gen Wagner and ordered me to report to brigade headquarters

it was now coming daylight and when we got to Brigade headquarters I found Gen Wagner just redy to mount his horse I gave him the note the offiser had gave me after he read it he took me by the hand and said my boy you and your men have don well and I am glad to giv you the 5 days of much needed rest now he says I want you to go back to ambulance train and take a good sleep if you can wher you wil be say he says the second Brigade wil do some hard fighting to day and I am glad you wil not be in it for you have don your part he says I am a frade when the sun gos down to night that some of the boys will be takeing thar long sleep then he gave me a written releaf from duty for self and the eaight 8 men

we went back around on the north side of the mountain we found the ambulance train in camp and all so the Captain of the Commissary he told me to come over to his camp that he had somthing good over thar for me as soon as I eat my brakefast I went over he was haveing some beeves butchered I let him see the written releaf that the Gen had giv me he said to me you must be tired and hungre then he had the butcher to giv me about 10 lbs of beef I went back to wher my men were and found them all sleep a teamster loaned me a camp kittle and I soon had the beef cooking I watched it for 2 hours I got so tired I coud not

hold up my head eney longer I had slep 4 hours in the last 48 hours and worked hard all that time under exstream excitement and now I was all in I coud do no moor. I took some of the beef supe out of the kittle and drank it then I then I waked up Mort Ballenger and had him watch the beef I lay down and soon went to sleep with the roar of battle all around me it was late in the evening when I waked up the battle was rageing with roar of cannon and musketry and the forst on the side of the mountain was on fire and smoke was hanging over us like a grate clout and the smell of burnt green Pine was allmost suffacating some of the ambulance had gone to the frunt and wer bringing back the wounded I had a talk with one of the drivers he told me the rebs wer still on top of the mountain but wer on the retreat but wer puting up a hard fight to keep from being takeing prisner

as night came on we coud see the fire all along the side of the mountain as darkness came on the roar of battle died away and it became quite except now and then an ambulance would go by at last the morning came and the news that the rebs wer gone as soon as we coud after brakefast we went to wher our Co was in camp as that was the morning to draw suplys of food we wanted to be on hand to git out part

this battle was fought the first week of July 1864 if I remember right the 57 regiment lost 60 men killed and that meney or moor wer wounded 5 or 6 killed in company D (my own company) at the verry place wher we had put up the last 2 pits the fire burned the clothing off the dead as thay lay on the ground wher thay had fell and the next day the bodys were so badly decomposed that thay wer burryed wher thay lay

well Mort and I thought we would visit our old company D we had not seen the boys for 4 or 5 weeks its like going home I had not seen them cence I joined the Pioneer Co it was sad to see how the ranks of Co D had been thined out a 25 per cent of the men had been killed or wounded or sent away sick.

Mort and I marched along with the 57 we marched south thru Marietta and on south till we got near Chattahoochee river thar we turned east for a mile or 2 and went in to camp in the woods the next day Johnney Davis and I wer talking I ask Johnney if he had ever bin out forogeing eney yet he said no he had not but he would like to go affull well I told him I had don ever t'ing elce the old boys has don except to go out and look for something good to eat and I am redy to go to day if you wil he said all right I wil go but we can not find much back behind us and we can not git out to the frunt without a pass I told Johnney I had a pass for my self and I bleved I coud git him thru the pickit line we had to slip off not let eney one know we wer going.

so we took our guns and sliped out to south gard line in the woods the gards wer about 10 rods a part I told Johnney to keep about 4 or 5 rods to the left of me and when I came to the gard I would pull out my pass and while the gard was reading the pass I would stand up close to the gard in sutch a maner that the gard coud not see Johnney till he had past the gard line then the gard would have no right to stop him



so we got out all right and went on south for a little space we came to small stream with a high bluff on each side of it the stream run from the east to the west we wer up the stream it was crooked we could not see far a head it made us a frade we mite run in to the rebs we went slow and kep in the bushes as much as we could till we came to a small field along the stream thar we got a glimpse of building farther the stream on a hill we went on till we past a grove of trees then we saw a house and a apple orchard that was just what we wer looking for and it did not take us long to git thar but when we began to up the hill we was a frade the rebs would see us so we crawled along the fence and after all our trouble we did not find one apple fit to eat so we crawled in to the garden and got a fue little potatoes then we saw a small building not far from the house with a door in the end nex to the house the door was locked with a padlock Johney said Rees thar is something good to eat in that little house that is whi it is locked I told Johney we would be seen if we tried to git in that house John said les try it eney how so we crawled thru the fence and got part of the way to the little house when we looked at the large house thar on the back porch sit an old man he had not seen us yet we lay still in the grass and weeds for some time undesided what to do then I picked up a small stone and throwed on to the porch the man did not move we decided he could not hear so we crawled on up to the little house I pushed my bayonet under the latch and lock and the staple pulled out the Johney pulled the door open it was hung on wooden hinges and made a noise like a bugle horn I looked for the old man he was on the porch just like he had been this small house had but one door and no windows in it.

in the far end was a large barral or hoghead I told Johney to watch the man and I would see what was in hoghead I went up to it and is was as high as my shoulder I tried to pull it over so I could see what was in it but it was too hevey for me so I told Johney to come help me we both took holt top of barral and pulled it over so the light from the door would shine in it and in the bottom of the barral was 5 or 6 inches of salty grease and on top of that was one small side of smoked bacon I had Johney to hold the barral while I would reach over in the barral and git the bacon in order to reach the bacon I had to git moor than half of my body in the barral and just as I put my hand on the bacon thar came a crash of reble bullets thru roof of the smoke hous Joney let go of the barral and as it went back in to the perpendicular position I was throwen head down in to the barral for a moment I thought I would smother in the grease and salt but in some way I never knew how I got my head up and my feet down and as I came up and grabed the meat and droped it out on the floor then jumped out of barral picked up my gun stuck the bacon on the baynet jumped out the door

I looke down thru the orchard saw Johney running down the hill taking steps of about 12 or 15 feet long then I looke south a cross the little valley and thar on a high hill I saw 4 or 5 reble cavalry I sopose thay saw us open the smoke hous door and had fired at us to keep

us from taken the meat but thay wer to slow I got the meat and got a way with it this was all don in much less time than it takes to tell it I bleve it was less than 2 minutes from the time we got we got to the smoke hous till I was out with the meat

It was lucky for Johnney and I that the rebs did not know that we wer a lone thay the rebs thought that we had a large force of men hid in the brush along the stream that made them afrade to come a cross that is what saved Johnney and I that time as I came out of the smoke hous my hair ears eys and nose wer full of salty grease in fact I was covered with it from head to foot I was in a prety bad fix the salt in my eys allmost put them out yet I had to run down a hill thru an orchard cline a fence was going along as good as I could thru the underbrush next to the stream when I ran in to Johnney laying in some bushes he began to laugh at me as soon as he saw me I threw my gun and side of meat on the grass and put my hands up to my eys Johnney said whats the matter with you I said am blind my eyes is full of salt and grease Johnney said Rees you are the most miserable looking human being I ever seen whi he said you are nothing but salt and grease from head to foot even your blous pockets are full he then began to take off my clothing then he led me down to the stream made me lay down in the watter and helped me git rid of the salt and greas after we all out my hair eyes and ears we tryed to scrape it off my cloths but could not do much good at it Johnney said he would wash my pants and blous in the morning and I could lay in bed till thay dried we went on till we came in site of our picket line thar we stoped and made coffee and fride some of the side meat that was the caus of me giting in to barral of greas the meat was much better than eney we had eat cence we left home after dinner we took a rest then we went to camp

as we came in to camp we seen Cap Finey coming our way and Johnney said look Rees what wil we do Cap is coming and wil want to know wher we have ben I told Johnney to keep still and I wil fix Cap just as we met Cap I pulle a small peace of the bacon out my haversack and said Cap I have brought you some good cuntry bacon and as I gave it to him we jist walke on he never said a word to us we went to Johnneys tent and meney of the boys came and wanted to know wher we had been but we never told eney body a bout our first forge experiance and Johnney and I promast each other that never againe would we try eney thing like that and I never did I had enuph to me a file time

the next morning I had a long talk with Cap finey he told me the bacon I give him was the best he had ever eat he wanted to know wher I got it I says Cap I do not want to tell for it wil not do you eney good to know as thar is not eney moor in that smoke hous wer I got one side and I come verry near not giting it I told Cap I would not do eney thing like that eney moor Cap said oh yes Rees you wil if you git hungre enuph I dont blame you at all but look out dont let the rebs git you

wel 2 of the 5 days wer gone and put in the other 3 days washing and mending my cloths so ends the first chapter the next chapter wil tell of the battle of Peach Tree Creek

closeing in on Atlanta city
my sickness
the hosputtle
back to the 57 regiment
train gard duty
Lookout Mountain
the rade down Lookout vallie
the race to Nashvill
a lot moor hard fighting at Spring hill
and the hardest of battles at Franklen Tenn
2 days fight at Nashvill

Chapter 2

So the 5 days off of duty came to an end it had ben happy days for me the best I had seen once I had left home had a real good visit with the Willamsburg Boys we all had so much to tell each other I had my cloths all cleaned up and I was redy for work so Mort Ballenger and I went back to the Pioneer Company wher we found plenty to do in makeing roads to the river and closing in on the rebs we had to make new skirmish pits ever night all ways a little nearer to the rebs this went on for 2 weeks then our Brigade was ordered to our left two miles then we advanced to frunt gen Wagner had sent me a little mule so we had him packing our tools on his back so we got along better

the pioneer was in the advance line with the skirmish line we came to a small deep stream called Peachtree Creek the skirmishers swam the creek and advanced across a field to the woods thar thay found the rebles picket line the Pioneer Company was ordered to put a bridge across the creek the bank of the creek on our side was about 10 foot high on the other side not moor than 3 or 4 feet

we went to work cuting down tall pine trees cuting the logs 40 feet long and laying them across the stream side by side as close together as we coud git them to make the bridge level we had to dig in to the bank on our side and make a kind of bench for the end of the logs to lay on after we got sixteen logs layed across we took fine pine brush and layed all over them than we began to pull the bank down and put the dirt on top of the brush to a depth of a foot or moor then it was redy for use

the 57 was the first regiment to cross over it it filed to the left and went east up the creek then came the 26.6. H. (?) regiment it filed to the right and went down the creek the Pioneer Company went across and started south across an old field that was completly covered with dewberry vines about knee high and thay wer full of berrys but we did not have time to pick them we hurried on across the field wher our skirmish line was and some of the

offisers had marked out a line along the edge of the grove for us to build a breastworks on we stacked our guns knape sacks and haversacks close to a road then we went to work

we piled logs and fence rails a long the line then dug a ditch along the north side and put the dirt on top of the logs and rails we began work near the road and worked eastward we had been working about 3 hours and got about five hundred yards of breastwork done when we heard the rebels yelling and our skirmishers firing we looked up south thru the grove and saw our skirmishers falling back on the run as fast as thay coud come and the rebs just behind in 3 battle lines and yelling to beat the band all along our whole frunt thay had slipped up on us we did not have time to git our guns thar was only one thing for us to do that was for us to run for the bridge across the dewberry field and we did not wait for someone to tell us to run it was everyone for himself

it was right thar and then that I found out that I was a good runner thar was a fue of the boys that kep up with me but not one got ahead of me the reble bullets cuting thru the dewberry vines made a peculiar sound that was inclined to make you run faster I think it was a grate help to me but hard on my pants legs as thy wer torn into ribbons as I went thru the dewberry vines wel I got to the bridge and found my mule and led him to a stump to git on his back as I was too tired I coud not jump on his back alltho he was a verry small mule

then I went north along the road thru the woods that we had made the day befor I had got about a forth of a mile into the woods when I met the Captain of the artillery I told him if he coud git his guns up to the bridge he coud drive the rebels back he gave a blast on a bugle and six cannons came flying around a curve in the road each cannon had six horses to it and thay past me on a dead run I tryed to keep up with them but thay left me and the little mule away behind and long befor I got to the bridge thay wer giving the rebels plenty of canister and grape shot the rebels wer about 400 yards from the bride when the artillleary got thar and when thay opened fire on them the rebs went down like grass befor the saythe thay broke and run back to the woods

I looked up the creek and saw the 57th boys coming down the creek on the north side the rebels had forced them to swim the creek thay wer as weet as drowned rats thar amminition was wet and thay wer badly in need of dry amminition the Capt of artillery said the amminition train was that in the woods a little ways so I went on the run as hard as my little mule coud take me I soon came back with a six mule team following me with a load of dry amminition

by this time the rebs were all out of sight except the dead ones and thar was a lot of them and thar wer a lot of wounded that the rebs lef on the field the 57th had one man drowned 3 or 4 wounded we went back across the field and thar we found our guns knapsacks and everthing just as we left them all of this was done in a verry short time it was not moor than one hour from the time the rebs drove us from our work till we wer back and our brigade was with us to help hold the works

right now I had to help to the worst job I ever did in my life collect all the dead rebs and bury them we would dig a trench 6 feet wide and 3 feet deep then lay the dead men in crossways then spread the dead mans blanket over them and fill the grave with dirt we would put as many as 50 to 100 in one grave to take holt of a dead man was something I thought I could not do and took all the nerve I had to do it after I had helped lay 10 or 15 in the grave I did not mind it so bad it was in a pine grove when we buried them the smell of the pine trees and that awful smell of the dead made a verry deep impression on me so deep that when I smell a pine forest I think I smell dead men allso

this battle was fought the 19th of July the next day the rebs left thar line of work and fell back into thar main line of works around Atlanta we were moved to the west and south a mile or moor we had stoped on the north side of a hill next to a stream waiting for our offisers to locate a line for us to work on just above us on the hill was our artillery shelling the rebs and the rebs wer sending a cannon ball our way ever five minutes one cannon ball hit the top of the hill and came bounding down the hill just to the right of us and hit a young boy of the 40th Ind regme and he was torn into sevrul parts one arm was in the top of a small tree his legs wer found on the north side of the stream some 40 or 50 feet from wher he was standing when the cannon ball hit him it was a horrible sight to look upon as we wer standing around the remains Gen McPherson came along he stoped and looked at the remains took off his hat then rode on to the top of the hill made a short stop thar than started east on the other side of the hill and was soon out of sight that was the he was ever seen alive he ran into the reble skirmish line was killed the reble skirmish line was captured a short time afterward and Gen McPherson body with it Gen McPherson was as nice a man as I ever saw he was as good as he looked he loved by all that knew him the death of McPherson cast a gloom over the whole arme

wel after this for weeks and weeks we kept crawling up closer and closer ever night until we got as close as we dared go the rebs got on to how we wer creeping upon them in the night to put our skirmish pits so thay thought thay would put a stop to it by firing a volley to the frunt ever night 3 or 4 times one night I was helping my men carry a log to the frunt to make a pit

Volume III

we were close up to the rebs works all at once the rebs began firing all along thar frunt it was so dark thay could not see us and we were so close up to thar works that thay over shot us not one of us was hit we droped down on the ground and lay still till the rebs stoped firing then my men began to crawl back the way we came we did not dair to talk as the rebs would hear us when we droped to the ground the log fell on my leg I could not tell the boys for fear the rebs would hear me and go to shooting agane

so all the boys left me not knowing I could not get up I lay thar verry still a little

while then felt around till got hold of a handspike and by hard work I managed to role the log off of my leg that was hurting me so bad I could hardly help from crying out with pain I found that there was no bones broken I was glad of that as I knew I would soon get well so I went limping off to camp in the mean time the boys had missed me till they got to camp they waited a little while and I did not come and they were just ready to start back to look for me when I came limping into camp they were a glad bunch of boys when they saw me but no gladder than I was that was the last time I ever went out to work at night during the siege of Atlanta

during the month of July and August we had little to do except to fix a few mud holes in the wagon roads there was hard fighting along the line at some point every day the bullets were whistling over our heads all through the day one could not be perfectly safe except he was in the trenches

one hot day I went to the spring to fill my canteen we used a quart can to dip the water out of the spring I had just filled the can and was in the act of pouring the water into the canteen when a rebel bullet hit a limb in the tree tip and glanced down and went straight through the bottom of the can that I was holding in my hand and made a nice hole in the bottom I just held the can over my canteen and the water went into the canteen much better than it did when I tried to pour it out from the top of the can there was some boys waiting for me to fill my canteen they saw what was done they said thank you Johnny reb you have done for us what we did not have sense enough to do for ourselves the can was used for filling canteens as long as we stayed there I relate this little circumstance to show how unsafe it was in those long hot days of July and August

the rebel shells were bursting over us every day and a piece of shell would now and then find a boy in blue then we would carry him back and lay him beneath the sod and someone of us would take the hard task of writing to his mother to tell her that her boy had given his life for his and her country a scene like this all ways created a brotherly feeling among us it bound us closer together and I shall never forget a scene of that kind it is different from what we have in a hot fought battle where the men fall all around you there your mind is occupied with the work before you

the Pioneer Co was camped on the east side of a small corn field and the 57th regiment was on the west side Mort Ballenger and I would go over to the regiment every day to see the boys we had a path through the corn field one day we started to go and had got half way I was about 2 steps behind Mort a rebel shell bursted right over us about one hundred feet in air a part of the shell came down and buried itself in the path just between Mort and I Mort fell to the ground I thought he was hit but he was not touched he had fainted I had a canteen of water just from the spring I poured a little of it on his face and he came around all right when he opened his eyes and saw me he said Rees are you alive I said I am feeling very much alive but how about yourself you keeled over like you were hit well

he said Rees I thought that piece of shell had gone clear through you it just simply scared the life out of me I said Mort when you went down I came verry near losing my nerve and falling on top of you now if a circumstance like that had happened in battle no one would have taken notice of it but now as Mort and I were crossing the field we were jokeing each other and laughing and having a little fun then the shell came along and the situation was changed so quick that Mort fainted because he thought I was killed

the days weeks went by not much change in our part of the line the last of August I was feeling bad had light chills I went to our regimental doctor Dr Mendenhall he gave me a lot of quinine to take I could not see that it did me any good about this time Shirman began to move his army Mort wanted me to the Dr and get a permit to the hosptal I did not want to go to the hosptal I was afrade I would die if I went thar Mort made me go see the Dr agane I did not tell the Dr how bad I felt for fear he would send me to the hosptal

it was late when I got back Mort had super redy and while we were eating we got orders to move we got redy in a hurry and fell in with the company and marched back about a mile and stoped close to the ambulance train I felt so bad I could barley stand up Mort told me he was going to put me in a ambulance I told him I had no permit to ride in an ambulance it was now dark an Mort got one of the ambulance drivers to let me ride with him so with Mort's help I climbed in to the ambulance it was bout 8 foot long 4 foot wide it was cushions on the bottom and sides and had raised cushion in the front end for a pillow it was a hot night and the mosquitoes were thick buzzing all around me I got no rest for them the ambulance started the roads wer bad full of chuck holes I was rolled from one side to the other thar was one good thing the ambulance trane did not travel all the time thay would stop ever mile or so and that would giv me a little rest that was kept up till morning

then the ambulance stoped for brakefast I could not eat so I went to sleep and slep until the ambulance started on the road then the jolting awakened me I wanted water the driver gave me a drink but it was so warm that it was not fit for a dog to drink I could hear the cannons boom in the distance and knew a battle was raging my fever came up my head ached like it would burst I kept giting worse and worse untill I thought I could not stand it any longer I had rolled from one side of the ambulance to the other all thru that long hot day I though it would never come to an end but at last it did stop in a grove close to a large tent the driver helped me out then he drove away I felt to weak to stand up alone so I learned up against a tree a young Dr came along and wanted to see my permit I told him I did not have one he began to curse me he called me a dam coward said I was just playing off trying to keep out of battle I was so mad I trembled from head to foot I grabed my gun that leaned against the tree and he jerked out his sword just then someone came up on a horse and said stop that I looked up and thar on his horse was my old friend

Dr Dillon

he got off of his horse and took holt of me and told me to sit down by the tree then he turned to the young Dr and asked him what the truble was the young Dr said that I was a play off and that thar was nothing the matter with me Dr Dillon on his knees and examined me than turned to the young Dr and said you will consider yourself under arrest then he called to some men in the tent and told them to bring a stretcher the men came and layed me on the stretcher and carried me into the tent that was the last I remembered

I became unconscious I do not know how long I was in that condition it must have been as long as two day or moor for when I came to my self I was lying on the floor of a verry long and wide room thar wer sick and wounde all around me I was so weak I coud not raise my head two of the Willamsburg boy Bob Martin and Harve Yellington came and sit down by me and tried to talk to me I could not hear then verry well as thar voices seemed away off some place thay got a can of blackberries and fed me some of the juice with a spoon then thay filled my canteen with good watter the first I had had for a long time I felt a little better and soon went to sleep when I waked up Dr Dillon was siting by me he told me that I was a verry sick boy and he would see to it that went north on the first train that left Atlanta I asked him wher I was he said you are in a large cotton depot in Atlanta Doc gave me some medicien and left me that was the last time I saw him for a long time I do not know how long I lay thar in that cotton depot as I was unconscious most of the time I think about three days a strange Dr would giv me medison 3 or 4 times a day

one morning two men layed me on a stretcher and carried me out and put me on a train thay took off my cloths and layed me on a cot beteen sheets I did feel so good I had been laying with my cloths on for a week or moor my cot was on a level with the car window which was open and let in the cool air I felt moor comfortable than I had for a long time the train soon began to move and the motion of the car soon put me to sleep so I lay in an unconscious state for a long time and when I came to my selfe some men were takeing me off the train and puting me in an ambulance then I lost my self agane and when next knew eney thing I was in a verry long tent

I was in the middle of the tent on a cot as I was so weak I coud not raise my head I coud not see eather end of the tent I wondered if I had gotten in to another world and if ever body was sick or wounded as I coud hear moaning and grunting and praying and cursing and the cry of distruss all around me in my half unconscious state of mind I coud not make out wher I was I did not know what was done or what was going on around me a Dr come 3 or 4 times a day after a long time I began to feel a little better I felt like it had been years sence I had eaten eney thing, yet I did not know what I wanted the doctor tried to git me to talk to him I would say yes or no that was all the Dr was a nice looking man of 30 or 35 years a short hevey set man verry fair light hair and mustache and

a gotee all smiles and full of jokes day after day he tried to git me to talk to him was so much suffering and distress all around me that it got on my nerves I thought that Gen Shirman was right when he said war is hell I wondered if I was gitting my punishment for runing runing a way from home and going to war lying thar and listening to all the grones and seeing the suffering and distress was enuph to kill a well man let alone a boy so sick he could not raise his head so I said to myself this wil never do I must not let the sick and wounded men hear kill me with thar grones and suffering I must think of something else

so I began to think of Willamsburg and all the folks I knew and wondered waht thay were all doing then I would think of all that I had ever done in fact I lived my life over a grate maney times ever day in that way I kept my mind off my suffering neighbors I kept this up for a week or moor and I thought it helped me so I tried a little harder to keep my ming occupied I did that day after day thinking of many little of my boyhood days that I never would have thought of if I hat not placed in the condition I was in

one day the Dr was standing by a cot a little ways in front of my cot I was thinking of a time when my brother and I was up in the woods along the creek all a sudden the doctor came to me and the following dilogue took place Dr what were you laughing at me for I I was not laughing at you at all Dr what wer you laughing at I I did not know I wer laughing at all Dr wil you were laughing not out loud but you grinned from ear to ear I well dock I am glad if I did smile for I was afrade I would forgit how to laugh Dr wil come now tell me what was so funny I oh Dr you wil not want to hear about some foolishness of my boyhood days Dr I was a boy once and would like to be one now so you go ahead and tell the funny joke

I well Dr I will tell you but I know you wil think I am silly well doctor my brother Mell and I were up in the woods playing along the creek my brother was 4 years older than I we were killing snakes and frogs we came to a large drift in the creek thar was one long pole that stuck out over the creek brother said he could climb out on the pole and have a good place to swing or teeter up and down I said Mell I bet you can not do that well he says just watch me then he began to crawl out on the pole the pole worked up and down enuph to disturbe a nest of yellow jackets thay came out and began to fly around Mell looked around and saw them he could not git back on to the drift with out giting into the yellow jackets nest so he began to climb out on the pole the yellow jackets kept giting closer and closer then one of them got on his neck and one on his foot and he tride to nock them both off at once lost his ballance and fell in about 4 foot of watter Doc when I think of that I feel like laughing but I did not know that I did laugh the Dr laughed long and loud at my litle story I then told doc I had been living my life over a good many times ever day he said go on it is the best medison you thar is for you to take

after this doc would come and sit with me and tell me funy storys I began to improver but verry slow I was living on beef tea I never wanted to git away from a place so bad in

my life the weeks rolled by I could stand up and walk a little I was gaining in strength I soon was able to git out side of the tent and thar to my left was lookout mountain it was a grand sight I would sit for hours and look at it

one day the doctor came and sat with me he said to me my young friend you are looking a good deal better than I ever thought you would look when you first came hear he says do you know what it was that started you to git better I said yes dock I know just when it was he says tell me about it well I one morning just after sunup I was lying thar on my cot too weak to turn my head I could see the north end of the tent I saw a woman come in the door she was the first woman I had seen for a long time she wore a white apron and a white sunbonnet she came along thru the tent stopping at ever cot and giving the sick something she came up to me and put one arm under my head and raised my head a little and gave me a cold drink of buttermilk then she said my brave brother I think you will git well now soon don't you think you wil I said yes I am going to get well it then dock that I felt a change come to me and I have been improving ever since I drank that buttermilk dock said I am to see you looking so well did you know that you wer so bad that we all giv you up to die whi he said for three or four days you lay and just breathed that was all the life in you your perfect heart and lungs is what saved you I said dock what was the matter with me eney way He said my god boy did you not know that you had the typhoid fever no I said I did not know what was the matter with me wel he said it was just as wel or better that you did not know then he told me I must not sit out thar in the bright light as I see that your eyes are verry weak and you must be verry careful or you wil lose your eyes he says I see you keep your left eye shut most of the time now let me examine it

after he had examined it he told me to go back in the tent and stay in the dark for a fue days so I went back for a day or two then I told Doc I would not stay in that old tent eney longer wel he said I wil fix you so the next morning he gave a pair of blue specks to wear also a large green shade to wear on my forehead a cane to walk with so I think I must have been a verry comical looking clown as I walked around outside the tent I could not see verry wel but it beat staying in that old tent my apatite came back to me I could not enuph to eat the nurse would bring my meals to my cot and then I had to sit and eat among all that misery I wanted to the mess hall where the convalessents went to eat I asked the nurse to let me go thare he said no not for a week or two so I got after the Dr to make them let me to to hall to eat he said no it wil not do for you to go to mess hall to eat that I must eat just what the nurse brought me wel I said he does not bring me half enuph the Dr says thay giv you all that you should have til you git stronger so I had to eat in that big old hospital tent a week longer but I kept at doc ever day to let me go to the hall to eat wel he said you can go I wil tell your nurse to look after you or you wil kill yourself down thar at the hall

so long befor dinner was redy I got out side not far from the hall waiting for the bell to

ring for dinner and when it did ring I started across the street I got about half way across when a grate crowd of men came running across the road thay ran against me and I fell face down in about three inches of dust a nurse came and helped me up and took me back to my cot and brushed the dust off my clothes washed me and then took me by the arm and led me over to the hall and sat me down at the end of a table then he brought me the same kind of stuff that I had had in the tent I went back to my cot and the Dr was thar he want to know how I liked my dinner I told him I liked it fine whi he said did you git moor to eat I told him I did not git as much he said whi what was it you did not git I said grunts and groans

from that time on I ate at the hall and began to grow stronger ever day I did not stay in the tent much of the day I put in my time walking about the hospitol tents I found that the tent I was in was onley one of ten large tents each tent was 100 x 24 feet and had forty to fifty wounded or sick men in them some of them going away ever day some of them went a live and some went dead with moor coming in to take their places thar were tents for the doctors the nurses the teamsters and other men employed around the hospitol in all it was quite a large camp this hospitol was known as No 3 hospitol thar was two others one of them on top of lookout mountain as the days came and went I gained in strength the weather was warme and dry the watter from the spring that we drank was warm

one day I met the Dr in one of my walks he told me to come over to his office that he had something to tell me I went with him and as soon as we got in to his tent he gave me a drink of ice watter oh how good it was I told dock that that drink was worth a dollar to me and I would pay him as soon as I drew my pay he said he was glad to give me a good drink he said he thought I would soon be strong enuph to go home on a month furlough how wil that suit you I told him I would glad to go home wel he said in a week or ten days you can go home now he says you come up hear ever day at two o klok and I wil giv you a good drink of ice watter but do not tell any one about it for I have not got enuph to go all around to all just come alone

so I began to get a little acquainted with the Dr felt at home with him ever body was strangers to me and I go so hungry to see someone I knew at first I thought it would be fine to go home then I would think that thay might not want me at home at all so I told doc that I did not want a furlough that I wanted to go back to the regement as soon as I could stand the trip wel he says you are a quear boy not to want to go home I said I am not quear it is my home that it

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him that I felt all right but that I had taken a long walk and come back tired out and had laye down to rest and went to sleep and you came and waked my up well he said it is not common for you to sleep in the fornoon I felt a little uneasy about you but it is all right you just sleep all all you want to the moor the better so I took that long walk for three mornings

the forth morning I got up one hour sooner a little befor daylight ever body was asleep about the tent my knapsack and haversack was under my cot but my gun I did not know where it was so I had to leve it I put all my clothes and all that belonged to me in my knapsack and haversack then I sliped out without being seen by eney one and took the road to Chattanooga

but I soon had to stop and rest as my knapsack got prety hevey it was after noon when got to Chattanooga I went to the car yards thar I saw a squad of soldiers giting their dinner I went up to them and asked them for somthing to eat as I was very hungry thay wer very kind to me and had me eat with them then I went over to the station and just as I got thar a freight train pulled in and when the conductor go off I knew him I knew he belonged to the 57th regiment I went up to him and told him all about myself how I had run away from the hospitol and wanted him to help me git back to the 57th he looke at me then said you are the boy in company D that caught a rebel one morning at Resaca are you not I said yes I am the boy well he says I wil do what I can for you I am going to take this train to Atlanta but I can not take you for the patroles wil go thru this train befor it leves here and you have no pass so thay wil not let you go in it I said can you not hide me some place where the patrol wil not see me

he says come with me he led the way to the caboose thar was a long wide chest along one side of the car with a lock on it he raised the top up and took my blanket and put it in the bottom then he told me to crawl in and to lie down and keep verry still after I was in he shut the top down and locked it then went out to git orders when to start his train the chest had cracks in it so I had plenty of air I lay thar thinking of the time I run away from home and of the good luck when the patrole came in and passed on thru the car then the train started and the conductor came in and let me out and all the train men came into the caboose and thay all thought that I was a very strange boy to run away from the hospitol to keep from being sent home on a furlough thay said thay would be glad to go home

I had a green patch of cloth over my left eye I had to bathe my eye three times a day and put some medicine in it the train men made me lie down and thay done as good or better than the nurse did at the hospitol thay had plenty to eat and made a fire in a stove and made me soup to eat one of them gave me his cot to sleep on I went to sleep and did not wake up till near morning the train was moving along at a slow speed the train men told me that the mail train had passed us going south the train men got a good brakefast for me better than I got at the hospitol

I felt that I was very lucky to fall in with such a bunch of men and boys as good as thay were to me for I was very weak yet I had no feed with me as the train neared Atlanta I felt a gladness came over me as I knew I would soon see my old Williamsburg friends I thought the train was trying to see how slow it could go we passed in sight of kennesaw mountain after what appeared to me a verry long time the train pulled into Atlanta car yards

I ate dinner with the train men then I was redy to go one of the boys had found out that the 57th was two miles north east of town I started out on the railroad walked prety fast for a mile and gave out I had to lie down and take a rest I tried a gane but had to stop ever little bit to rest I saw a regement in camp I hurried on to find it was not the 57th at all I saw many other regments and went from one to the other looking for the 57th finaly I saw one of Gen. Wagners orderly on a horse I called to him he told me were the 57th was it was not far away I hurried on as fast as I could go finally I came in sight of the 57th I passed down the long street of tents and as I neared company D I saw Capt Finney Lieut Yellington and Asher Peares standing in frount of the Captains tent the captain was reading a letter to the rest of them I came up behind them

thay did not see me tile I spoke I helt out my hand to Capt and he said my god here he is now I was so weak and excited that I trembled from head to foot they led me into the Captains tent and I lay down on a cot they were all standing around me asking many questions I lay thar on my back and just looked at them so tired and so glad to see some one of knew that I did not know what to say all my friends came to see me Capt told me that he had just reseved a letter from the hospitol that told you had deserted I was just reading it when you cam up well I said I did run away from the hospitol whi what made you do that the Captain said the doctor was about to send me home on a furlough for a month and I did not want to go home well he says I can not understand whi you do not want to go home I said Capt I do not want to explain that to you now you will excuse me on that subject he said all right we will drop that part of it and do the best we can for you here

but he says where is your gun I told him I had left it in the hospitol some where then I told Cap a little about the hospitol and how I sliped away from thar and how I made my way to Atlanta Capt told me he would haft to charge that gun to me that I had lost I told him to charge it to the hospitol as it was still thar Cap had me to eat supper with him then John Davis came up and told me he had made arrangements for me to bunk with him so Johney took my knacksack and haversack and led the way to his tent we went to bed and talked til I could not hold my eyes open aney longer when I woked up Johney had brakefast redy Mort Ballenger sent for me to come to the Captain tent

when I got thar I found all the Willamsburg boys thar that is what was left of them one half or moor had been killed or wounded Mort fixed a good seat and told me the boys all wanted me to tell of my experience while I was gone so I told them all I could remember then Mort told me he had seen Dr Dillon some time ago and doc told him that he thought you would not git well so Mort and all the boys were very much surprised to see me alive some of the boys said I looked moor like a dead than a live boy while we were talking Capt Finney pulled a gun out from under his bunk and said by gorge Rees I have found a gun for you see your luck is still with you and he handed me the gun and said he was glad me could replace the one I had lost

so the morning slipped away and it was noon and Mort had me eat dinner with him then I went to brigade headquarters to see Dr Dillon about my sore eye the doctor said to me when I stepped into his tent some one told me this morning that you had got back but I did not believe it for I had been mourning for you as dead for a month I told him I was not much better than a dead boy he looked at my eye and told me I would be one eyed if I did not take care of what was left he gave me some medicine for my eye and bid me goodbye and that was the last I ever saw of one of the best friends I have ever had he was always on hands at the right time

I do not know how long we were at Atlanta after this not more than two weeks the 57th was put on the RR as train guard to guard trains from Atlanta to Chattanooga we made three or four trips this was about the first week in October 1864 Gen Sherman was preparing to leave Atlanta and march to the sea and was sending back to Chattanooga and Nashville all the material of war that he could not take with him on the march the fourth army corps was to go back north to protect Chattanooga and Nashville under the command of Gen Stanley northern Georgia and Northern Alabama was over run with small bands of rebel cavalry and as we run our trains thru hills and mountains they would roll large rocks down on the train that made it very dangerous for us at times

we had been on the railroad for a week or ten days when a squad of rebel cavalry was seen the south end of Lookout Valley we had just pulled in to Chattanooga ten o'clock at night and was ordered to march to the top of Lookout Mountain it took us till sunrise next morning to get to the top I had about recovered from my sickness altho I had not been put on duty as yet we were on top of Lookout 3 or 4 days the last night I was corporal of the guard on a bridle path down the last side of the mountain with only one post to guard one of my men took sick about midnight and I took his turn on guard at one o'clock the place where I was on guard was about one fourth of the way down from the top of the mountain on a horse or bridle path that run a zig zag course down the side of the mountain small trees and bushes were standing thick on each side of the path that was one place where I could look between the bushes and see a small spot of light

so I kept a close watch on it to see if anyone came thru it I was thinking of that other time when I was on picket when the old mule scared me bad and was wondering what would happen to me this time when I heard some thing away down the mountain side at first I could not make out what it was but as it came up the mountain got closer to me I knew it was a horse or mule with shoes on for I could hear them knocking on the rocks as they climbed up the rough path so I kept a close watch on that one spot ahead of me in the path he had got so close to me now that I discovered that that was a man on the horse for I could hear his saber and gun knocking against the trees and rocks

now I primed my gun and made up my mind to give that man the worst scare of his life I kept my eye on that one light spot in the path and as soon as I saw it darken I fired at it

now it was my turn to git scared as the man and horse made so much noise in turning around and going back down the path that I thought thare were a hundred cavalry men after me so I turned and run back up the mountain as fast as I could my firing and the noise below me waked up the reserv gards thay came on the run down the crooked path to my support and thay came near running in to me with ther bayonets I explained to them what I had done and as we stood ther listening to the retreating rebles down the mountain we heard our regiment bugle call to arms so we went to camp as soon as we coud and found the regiment packing up and getting redy to march

I reported to Col Blanch the cause of my firing well he says we wil git that rebble if he dos not leve the vallie befor night by sun up we wer in lookout valley going south at noon we came to a farm wher five or six cavlry men had fed ther horses in the barn we pushed on as fast as we could jist befor night we found two rebles in a hous one of them got a way from us on his horse with the bullets flying a round him I did not think the boys tride to hit him I coud not help feeling glad he got a way the other reb was a young boy not much older than I was he was thar visiting his mother we had to take him a long with us

we wer told to strip the valley of ever thing for man or beast to live on we had corn meal and sweet potatoes I was sent out in to the cuntry with a wagon and five or six men to bring in any thing we could find we found a farm that had a long wooden trough full of sorghum molasses we put it in the wagon and started for camp we got a long all right untill we came to a hill then the molasses began to run out of the hind end so we lost three fourths of the molasses

we left this valley and marched west to Huntsvill Ala thar we got on a freight trane that took us to Pulaski Tenn thar we went in to camp and waited for rest of forth corp to catch up with us while we wer hear three hundred new recruits came to us I think ten of them wer given to our company Co D thay had no guns and the next day marched a long with us with out eney guns we started out with three days rations in our haversacks that was all we wer to have for five days

the second out we marched thru columbia and crossed a river just at night and formed in battle line on the north side of the river stacked our guns and got super the best we coud in the rain put up our tents and lay down I had just got to sleep when the bugle called us to arms we struck tents and fell in to ranks and marched out in to a corn field and formed a new line it was raining hard and the field was shoe top deep in mud we gathered corn stalks in piles an lay down on them with our gum blankets over us the rain just pouring down and I jist got to sleep when the old bugle called us to armes agane we wer marched round in that corn field in the mud and watter for two hours trying to form a strait line of batlle

after so long a time we came to a halt we wer wet to the skin and mud all over us and so cold we shook like one with the ague we piled up moor corn stalks and sat on them we coud hear musket fighting over on the south side of the river the rebles wer driving our rear

gards a cross the river at daylight and we marched out on the pike we was glad just to git out of that mud we marched north on the pike past a wagon trane two miles long 6 mules to each wagon it stoped raining and the sun came out bright and warm and we soon drye off and got warm we did not stop for brakefast we just eat what little hard crackers and raw salt pork at noon we stoped and made coffee but we had little to eat with it we did not stop any moor than twenty minutes then we took our place at the head of the long wagon trane

we had our first skirmishers on each flank out a bout one quarter of a mile from the pike we got a long all right untill a bout four o clock when our skirmishers on our right flank wer attacked just we got to springhill a small village we formed a battle line jist at the edge of the village our line of skirmishers wer being driving back by a company of rebles cavalry we let them come untill the cavalry got within about for hundred yards of us then we giv them one volley from our guns and turned and went back out of site in the maintime the wagon trane got a move on it I shal never forget the site I saw at Springhill Tenn one hundred or moor coverd wagons with six mules to each wagon the teamsters riding the near wheel mule with a long whip in one hand and a line to the leaders in the other thay all had teams on a dead run thay had lost ther hats and the wagons wer swaying frome one side of the pike to the other it was the wildest scene I ever witnessed thay wer bent on gitting from the rebles it was wel that thay did git a long as soon as thay did for the rebles struck the rear gard of the wagon trane with a hevey force of infantry not moor than half a mile south of Spring hill and thar was hard fighting till after dark

it was all our men coud do to hold the pike till the rest of our arme got past on the road to Franklin one of the wagons loaded with five barrills of whiskey up sit and was left by the side of the road and the rebs got so drunk the next day that thay coud not fight good well we did not have any super and soon after mid night we started for Franklin fifteen miles north it was raining and the roads wer verry bad so we made slow head way and we did not reach Franklin till after noon the next day and nothing to eat in site yet

the little town of Franklin is on the south bank of a small right in a horse bend of the river when we got thar we found a heavy line of breastworks from the river on the east side of town to the river on the west side of town having been made by some of our men that got thar the day befor this line of breastworks was the best line of breastworks I ever saw thay were four feet tick on top thar was a ditch on the in and outside from the bottom of the ditch on the outside to the top of the works was eight or ten feet the outside was as steep as clay coud be piled up and patted down with a spade about twenty five or thirty feet in front of the ditch was a line brush layed down and staked fast to the ground the brushey parts outward to a hight of five feet all the fine brush had been cut off near the ends leveing the ends as sharp as a knife it looked like it would be impossible to climb over it in front of this line of works was a bluegrass pasture about twenty five or thirty rods wide on the south side of the

pastur was a large cornfield and beyond the cornfield was a gradual rise in the land to quite a high ridge about a mile from town

when we arived in Franklin we were placed out in front of the breastworks on the south side of the pasture next to the cornfield a little to the west of the pike thar was a gap in the breastworks where the pike went into town with two cannons planted in the gap on the pike when we took our place next to the cornfield we coud look over the corn and see the rebel arme forming in battle line on top of the ridge and come down the ridge one after another we took the rails from a fence and piled them then we began to use our tin plates to shovel the dirt on the rails we had just commenced this when the rebels were upon us

we were ordered to rise to our feet we giv the rebs one volley and befor the smoke cleared away we had orders to right about double quick march and I turned around to run I look east to the pike thar I saw the rebels rushing down the pike Capt Finey saw them at the same time that I did he said my God boys the rebs have cut us off from the gap on the pike he say keep to the left and every man for him self I kept right with Capt and as I run across the pasture I was wondering how I was ever to climb over that brush but when Cap and I got to the brush we went over it somehow I never knew how we did it then we climed that steep clay bank and as we got to the top of the works the men on the inside of the works began to stick their guns over the works to shoot Cap told them not to shoot as it was his men coming I said no Cap thay are rebs just look at that rebel flag on the brush he look around and saw rebel flag then he and I both fell over inside of our works the ditch on the inside was about six feet wide and just as full of our men as it coud be waiting for us to git out of the way so thay fire when I fell over into the ditch I did not touch the ground the men held up their hands and caught me and passed me over their heads then it was that the battle broke loose and the noise of the battile was so grate that I thought my ears would split open

just where I went over the works was a large brick house I ran behind the house and out into a street just north of the gap on the pike thar were two or three hundred in the street an offiser on a horse called to us to charge the gap as the rebels were coming in thar so I with two or three hundred others all of them strangers to me no two of them same company offisers and privates all mixed up together charged up the street to the gap just in time to keep the rebs from turning the two cannons on us we took a fue prisoners and thar were a lot of dead rebs in the gap and a long down the pike

thar was so much noise that we coud not hear one another talk an offiser came to me with two prisoners and made signs to me to take them back over the river I started down thru the town with the rebel shells bursting all around me solid shot was nocking the houses down many houses were on fire and woman and children were runing and screaming as I went along I made the discovery that my gun was not loaded I did not know what to do as I knew that if the two prisoners found out that my gun was not loaded thay would git away

from me so I just put a fresh cap on and made the two rebs walk right in front of me I discovered that one of my prisoners was an offiser and that he was verry drunk so drunk that by the time I got across the river with him he was all in I turned my prisoners to a company that was to gard all prisoners sent to them I then went to the river to git a drink for I was allmost dead for a drink and for somthing to eat altho the battle was raging as fierce as ever as I came back up on the pike on the north side of the river I heard someone call out 57th

I looked up and thare by the side of a freight train on the RR about one hundred yards from me stood the captain of the commisary of our brigade he began to beckon to me to come to him I went up to him and he said he was going to put me in charge of a lot of rations for the 57th regiment I told him I did not know where my regiment was wel he says thay wil come across that bridge tonight and you have them to stop and git their rations he said thar were two barrells of pork and one barrel of sugar and two hundred pounds of coffee ten boxes of crackers now he said you had better get this stuff all down to the bridge and as the 57th comes over thay will see you he helped me roll the barrells down to the bridge and open them I went back to the car and got a box of crackers broke it open then took a chunk of fat pork sliced off a piece laid it on a cracker and I never in all my life eat anything so good as that raw pork and hard arme cracker it was the first food I had eaten for two days and I was almost famished and I knew that all the rest of the boys were just as hungry as myself

as soon as I had eaten and gotten the rest of the stuff down to the bridge I made a fire and got supper coffee and fried pork it was now sundown the battle was still raging the town was on fire and the air full of smoke moor drunken prisoners were coming across the bridge the ambulances were bringing the dead and wounded across the battle began at 4 PM and raged with fierceness until it got so dark and the rebs got so drunk that thay could not fight any longer thar is no tounge or pen that can tell all took place in that four hours of raging battle at Franklin Tenn the last of November 1864 I do not remember the exact date

as soon as the fierce fighting ceased our troops began to withdraw from the line of works that had proteceted them so well from so many bloody charges that rebels made against them when the fighting began the men of 57th regiment all did as I did looked out for self and not moor than two or three struck the works at the same place therefore thay became mixed in with the troops that was in the ditch and as the troops left the works that night the 57th boys wer scattered all thru that long line of troops as thay came marching over the bridge

I took my stand close to the pike at the end of the bridge and hollowed for the 57 boys thay would come to me two and three at a time and I would load them down with pork sugar and crackers and it did me good to see them eat thay were so hungry thay could not hardly wait to cut off a piece to begin eating some of them would say you are a bully good boy and others would say God bless you brother and then go marching on I hollered and hollered

untile I was so hoarse that I coud hardly talk at last the Col of the 57th came along with 15 or 20 of the 57th boys following him I stoped him and told him that the rations for the 57th were left with me and I wanted to know what I should do with them he said let the boys take all thay want and I wil leve a man heare with you and you two can stay hear as long as you think it is safe he said set fire to all that you cannot take with you do not leve anything for the rebs to eat the man that was left with me made coffee and I ate another good meal then Gen Wagner came along I stoped him and he got off of his horse and sat down and drank coffee with me then he told me to set fire to the pile of rations and make tracks for Nashvill about twelve or fifteen miles north

it was now a little after midnight we set fire to what was left of the rations the troops were all about across the bridge some men were piling combustibile material on the bridge in order to burn it down and now began that never to be forgotten hard march to Nashvill one regment of infantry and some cavalry wer to be the rear gard none of us had slep for three nights and the grater part of the arme had not eaten any food for moor than two days I had had a plenty to eat in the last few hours so I felt better than the majority of the men and boys did so I stepped along at a lively step I pushed on thru and past regment after regment till I had gotten out three or four miles on the Nashvill Pike then I began to find a grate number of boys lying beside the pike given out some were asleep I would wake them and give them a cracker and fat pork it did me good to see them eat I saw men go to sleep walking along the pike and fall over in the mud no one ever saw moor tired and sleepy men and boys than I did on that long tramp to Nashvill

at sunup I was in a few miles of Nashvill and some of the regment had stopped beside the pike and the men had dropped just where thay stoped and all of them offisers and all wer a sleep even the horses were stretched out sound asleep I went on till I saw a large tent I went up to it and found it was gen Wagners headquarters ever one was asleep but one gard he told me I would find the 57th over in the woods close by so I found my company all were asleep I soon had my bed on the grass and was as sound asleep as the rest I did not wake until afternoon on looking around I found that not moor than one half of the regment were thar but the boys came stragling in one and two at a time by night thay were all in that were not taken prisoner killed or wounded we went into camp three or four miles southwest of Nashvill

I do not remember just what the 57th lose in the battle of Franklin I think about sixty killed and missing and twenty five or thirty wounded Toney Martan was wounded and sent back to Louisvill Ky two of the best men in the company were taken prisonears as thay trying to git over the brush in front of the works at Franklin the rebels loss at Franklin was grater than in aney other battle of the war for the length of time the rebs lost 6 generals killed and over 5000 men in les than four hours fight

I was not verry wel I was not put on duty while wer at Nashvill till we started to

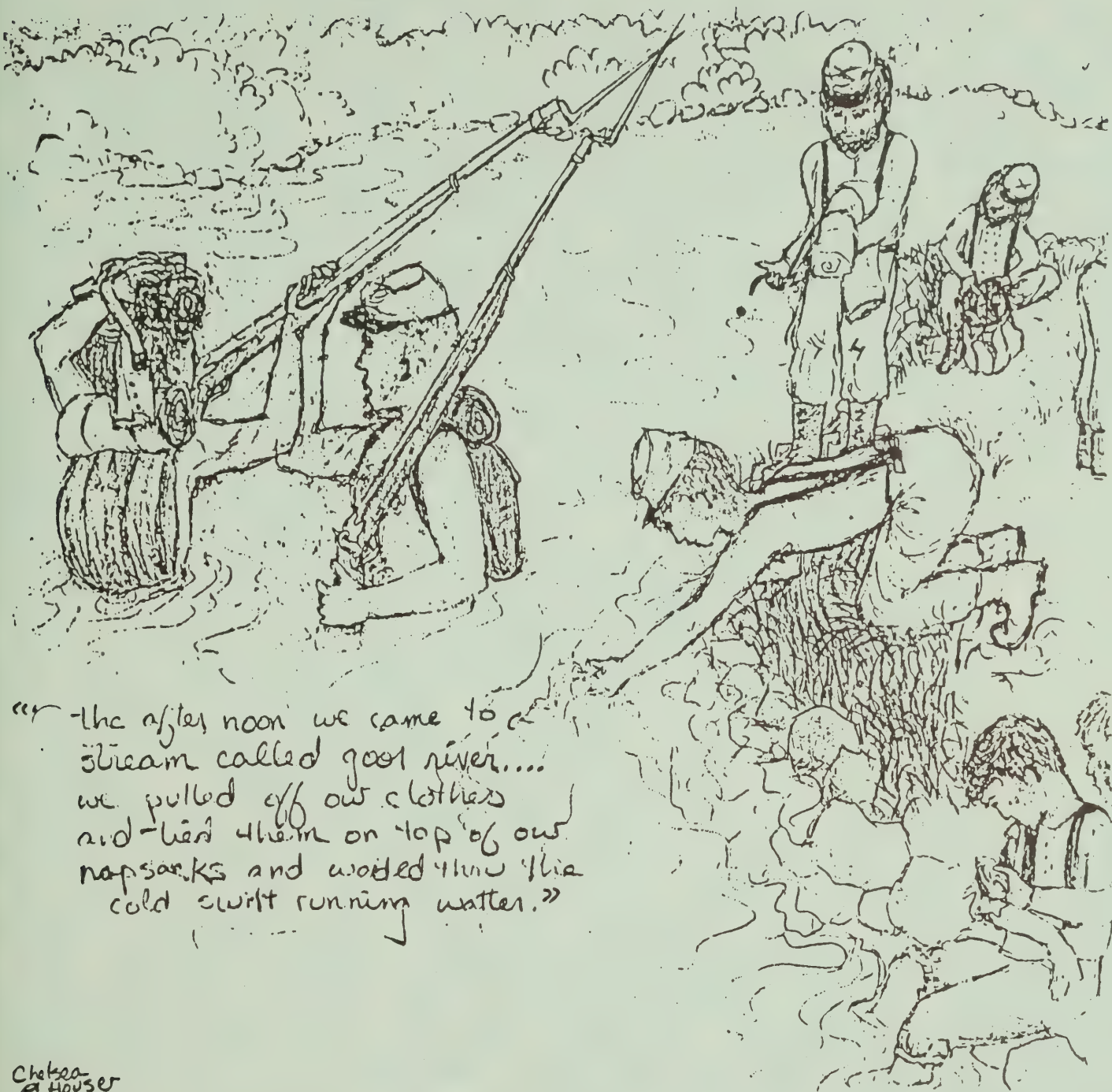
drive the rebs away from Nashvill about the 18 or 20th of December I got to feeling good agane the first days fight at Nashvill was not a hard day on the 57th we charged and took a rebel fort on top of a high hill just befor night and when we got up thar we coud look all over the battle ground and see the movements of all the arme we coud see our battle line for three miles moveing up against the rebels then we would see the rebs fall back and our men would follow them up untill thay got behind a stone wall or some hevey timber just at sundown we charged on another hill and drove the rebs out we went on over the hill after it was quite dark and went into camp so close to the rebs that we both got water out of the same stream that night the next morning we advanced on them and had quite a little battle with them our colonel was wounded on the arm he was on his horse close to as tree when a connon ball hit the tree and a large splinter from the tree stuck into his arm and he had to leve the field and Major McGraw took command of the regiment

we drove the rebs into a woods pasture and thay took thar stand behind a stone wall and thar thay stayed until about 4 PM when we charged them and thay broke and run across the woods pasture when I jumped over the wall I found the nicest little gun a five shot repeater I picked it up and ran on as fast as I coud we got within about four hundred yards of the stone wall on the opposite side of the pasture the last rebel was going thru a gap in the wall when he was shot in the back and he fell right in the gap I ran on ahead of the rest of the boys and picked the reb up and placed him to one side of the gap so he would not be tramped on by the men as thay rushed thru the gap as I leaned him up against the wall he asked me for a drink of watter I placed my canteen to his lips and he took along pull at it then he looke up at me it is all over with me my young friend God bless you I bid him goodby and picked up my two guns and hurried on to overtake my regiment I got tired of caring the extra gun so I left it in the woods I caught up with the regiment just as thay stopped for the night

the rebs were whipped so badly that the next day thay came into our lines in droves and layed down their guns and said thay wanted to quit fighting thay all took oath and started to their homes with a smile on their face and a gladness in their hearts we all rejoiced for we all felt that the end of the war was near

the next day we marched on south thru Franklin we saw the effect of the battle fought their a mont befor the field in front of the brest works had been tured into a graveyard thar the rebs had burried thousands of their dead graves and graves evarywhere one looked the old brick house that stood next to the pike looked like it mite have a bullet in every brick in the front part of it thar were hundreds of dead horses on ther yet the town was moor than one half burned it was certainly a distreasful looking place

we marched a few miles south of Franklin went into camp we were out of rations and we stayed in this camp untill the wagon train came down from Nashvill then we were given three days rations and that was to last us five days on the march to Huntsvill Al the third



"In the afternoon we came to a stream called goot river.... we pulled off our clothes and laid them on top of our napsacks and washed them in the cold swift running water."

Chelsea
or Houser

day on this march was the 24th of December 1864 it was a cold rainy day the roads wer shoetop deep in mud our rations were giting low and we did not go into camp untill dark it had quit raining and was colder

after supper I and another boy went out into the country to see if we could find something to eat we went about two miles thru a hevey forest we came to a farm but we found a lot of boys and men ahead of us the house was full of men thar was no show for us thar so we went to the backside of the farm and found a few sheep I shot one of them we skinned the hindquarters and took them to camp I waked up my mate had him to cook the mutton I lay down was soon asleep when I opened my eye the next morning I found three inches of snow on top of my blanket oh that was a merry Christmas morning the watter and mud had frozen but not hard enuph to clear up I was glad I had some good meat for brakefast and dinner

as soon as the sun came up the snow soon melted we started on the march erley that morning the roads were as bad as thay could be the mud was knee deep in many places in the after noon we came to a stream called goor river it was about 100 feet wide and not moor than three or foure feet deep no bridge to cross on so we pulled off our clothes and tied them on top of our napsack and waded thru the cold swift running watter the bottom of the river was full of rocks of all sizes covered with a slick watter moss that made it very difficult to walk thru the swift runing watter up to our waist one half or moor of the regiment got a ducking befor thay got across that was the most disagreeable experience I had wile in the arme

when we got on top of the bank we were as blue as indigo and shaking like one with the palsay we got our cloths on as quick as we could then made fires out of eney thing that would burn fence rails log barns or building of eney kind that we could git at this Christmas will never be forgotten by me it stands out bold and plain it cannot be rubed out Christmas day of 1864 was a day of suffering for me I hope and pray that no one will haft to go thru what we did on that Christmas 1864

we got within a few miles of Huntsvill that evening but had to stop as the roads were to bad to travel on after night after I had eaten the last of my mutton I lay down by the fire and fell asleep thinking of my folks and friends at home

the next day we arrived at Huntsvill Al our long hard march came to an end we were so glad to stop we were a pretty dirty hungry and tired ragged set of boys and men we made our camp just west of town we were given plenty of old lumber to build our huts with for we were told we would stay thar all winter we used our tents for roofing we had a fireplace in one end of the house and plenty of wood to keep us warm and to cook with

by new year 1865 we had our house complete and we felt at home and enjoyed life we had gotten new sets of clothes a full outfit two of my mess mates got boxes full of good things to eat from the folks at home thay were verry kind to share this eatables with me but it

made me feel verry bad to think that no one thought enuph of me to send me something

when I was in the hospittle I had the Dr to write to Dr Taylor at Willamsburg to send me ten \$ of the money I had left with him he sent it alright but I did not git it until the last of January 1865 it had been on the road four month the ten dollar bill was all most wore out when I got it I did not need it at all as I had ben paid off cence we came to Huntsvill had moor money than was good for me

a short time after this we got word from Louisvill Ky that Loney Martain was dead his brother Bob got a letter from the hospital that he was dead and wanted to know if he wanted take the remains to Willamsburg as soon as I heard of it I went up to the Captains tent to see Bob as he was staying thar at that time when I got thar the Willamsburg boys wer all thar talking about Loney I asked Bob if he was going to take Loneys body home he said I have not got the money to do that with I asked him how much it would take he said it would take one hundred dollars I said Bob I have a hundred \$ so you can have to take Loney home if you will promas to pay me back when I git home Capt Finey came to me and tuck me by the hand and said Rees you are a lucky boy you are all ways redy to do the right thing at the right time

Bob started at once for Louisvill to take Loney Martains body back to Willamsburg as I lay thar in my bunk I thought Capt Finey was right when he said I was a lucky boy it is true I had went thru a hard spell of sickness and many hard ships but hear I am well and looking forward to the time I would go home a live and well

so the days and weeks went by and the middle of February was hear in the south spring had come and the negroes under the management of the government were preparing the fields to plant cotton I would go out to a plantation and watch the negros and the mules plowing the ground getting redy to plant cotton one evening just befor sundown I left camp to go to a large plantation three or four miles north of camp I got to the farm after dark thar wer six hundred niggers living thar in log houses quite a little town of themselves I went into one of the houses to see if I could buy some cornbread a big old black woman told me to stay a while she would soon have some corn cakes for youens I sat down befor a large fireplace the black woman mixed up some corn dough and made out small loves then she put them in the hot ashes in the firplace to bake

while the bread was bakeing I heard praying singing and shouting across the streat I asked the old negro what was going on over thar she said it was a prayer meeting then I heard a banjo and fiddle so I went across to see what was going on over thar when I got thar I found that the log house had two rooms in one room the old negroes were praying and shouting to beat the band while in the other room the young niggers were dancing and when I got into the room I thought I had gotten into a skunks nest so I did not stay very long as I could not stand that kind of perfume

when I got back to where the corn bread was baking it wer all redy baked nice and

brown the old negro charged me ten cents each for the corn cakes I took five of them and started for camp when I got to the gard line I had to giv the gard one loaf to let me in that left one a pece for our mess the next day at dinner and super we thought it was fine for a change from the old hard crackers

I found the climate of Alabama verry much warmer than that of Indiana but a bout as dis agreeable we had a lot of cold rainey weather freezing a little at night and melting in day time Bob Martain came back after taking Loney's body to Williamsburg he brought a loving message to all the Williamsburg boys except me from thire at home I did not reseve a word from eney of my folks but Bob did bring me a nice Henry rifle a six teen repeater it was a verry nice light gun he bought it with the money that was made up in the town ship as a bounty for the boys that went to arme at the time I went it cost \$56.00 I was glad to git it as it was so light and very easy to keep clene and would shoot one mile

I think it was a bout the middle of March we left Huntsvill we got a board a freight trane went to Knoxville Tenn layed a round thar for a week or ten days then marched east ward on the R.R. 15 or 20 miles thar we found the R.R. all torne up and some of the men wer put to work repairing the road one day I got a permit for myself and Green Richards my bunk mate to go out in to the cuntry we went out north from the R.R. a bout 2 miles we came to a farm Thar was just an old man and his grand daughter liveing thar the old man was not verry well not able to work much his name was Brown we had killed some squirrels and he asked us to giv him one as he had not had no meat we giv him all we had 4 or 5 I bleve then the old man asked us what we would take to help him git up some fire wood I told him I would cut a load for him he giv me an ax and told me to go a cross the field to the woods and cut eney thing that would burn good he went to git his team I went to cuting wood and Green went killing moor squirrels in a short time the old man came with a little mule team hitched to a sled I soon had as much cut as his mules coud pull while he was gone with that load I cut a nother load

when he came back he wanted us to go to the hous and eat dinner with him well you may guess I was glad he did not have to coax me eney git me to go Green had killed a lot moor squirls and we got to the hous little Jeney Brown had dinner redy oh what a dinner that was I shal never for git it squirls and dumplings corn bread and butter milk sorgum molasses and pumpkin pie and we eat off a clene white plate and tablecloth and Jeney Brown waitting on us she had cooked that dinner on a big fire place she had no stove I eat and eat untill I was ashamed and quit

after dinner the old man told me what a hard time he had ben having it would take me a life time to tell all that I had seen and heard in the south land people that did not live wher both armes marched thru the cuntry do not know eney thing a bout hard times this old man and girl I felt sorrow for them and help them all we coud we cut and hauled moor wood for them and the girl got supper for us had fried squirl and buscuts and gravey the old

man and girl never did git don talking a bout my gun

after supper Green and I made our bed on the floor and was soon a sleeping about midnight I was awaken by hevey musket firing to the south of us I waked Green and we got up and went out side we coud hear volley after volley of musketry and we coud see the sky was lit up like thar might be houses on fire we thought the rebs had come back and attacked our troops a gain we run back in to the hous and got our guns an lit out for camp and left the old man and girl both crying and ringing thar hands

we run with all our mite and when we got near the camp we did not know whether it wer our men or the rebs that was burning up the camp but soon I saw it wer our men and we thought thay wer mad for thay wer yeling and runing a round throwing up thar hats and shooting off thar guns in the air and some wer hugging one an other some wer dancing and setting fire to ever thing that would burn and others wer singing we are going home we are going home we are going home tomorrow when I got to Company D John Davis came runing to me and put his arms a round me and I thought he would squeeze the life out of me

I asked him what this was all about he said the war was over and ever time he said the war was over he would hit me in the back and I think he said it a bout a hundred times then Bob Martain and the rest of Willams burg boys came up and took me thru the same process that Johny had and all the time singing we are going home tomorrow well when thay had all gotten thru I went to Cap Finney and he told me that Lee had surrendered and the war was over and we would go home in a few days ever one was happy I never saw so meney happy men in all my life

well by day light we wer on the march to Knoxville Tenn we wer two days on the road to that place in a few days we we got a board a frate trane the day we heard President Lincoln was assissinated and went to Chattanooga thar all the flags wer at half mast all the engines and tranes wer draped with crape as mourning for the dead president

it turned our joy to sadness we went right on to Nashvill thar we went in to camp west of town it was hear after I had been serving a year as corporal that I was given my certificate of appointment on the 25th of April 1865 a copy of same below

to all who shall see these presents greetings, Know ye that reposing Special trust and confidence in the Patriotism, Valor, Fidelity, and Abilities of Alvarez Coggeshall, I do hereby appoint him Corporal in Company D of the 57th Regiment of Indiana Vet. Infy. Vols, in the service of the United States to rank as such from the 25th day of April one thousand eight hundred sixty five, he is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of Corporal by doing and performing all manner of things there unto belonging, and I do hereby stricley charge and require all non commissioned officers and Soldiers under his command to be obedient to his orders as Corporal, and he is to observe and follow such orders and directions from time to time as he shall receive from me or the future commanding offiser

of regiment or other superior officers set over him, according to the rules and discipline of war. This warrant to continue in force during the pleasure of the commanding officers of the regiment for the time being, given under my hand at the head quarters of the regiment at Nashville, Tenn this 25th day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty five.

Signed by the

commanding officers

H. Lt. Fouts

1 st Lieut. an acting

adjutant of Regiment

A.S.O. No. 103

J.S. Summers

Commanding Regiment

soon after this capt came to me and told me that gen Wagner wante me to come to brigade head quarters he wanted me for an orderly or carrier Capt said I would have a horse to ride and have some one to cook my meals I said Capt I wil go if you wil not let me apoint one in my place Capt asked me who I would apoint I said Johnney Davis has rheumatism in his limbs let him go and if Gen Wagner does not like him he can send him back and I wil go I said to Capt the truth is I do not think I would like the job as thar is to much style up thar for me so Johnney got a job

time roled on and ever day we expected orders to go home we wer having a good time but we tired of that three miles south of our camp was a large park of several hundred acres that was full of deer and other game the park was enclosed with raile and stake fence the squirls wer thick in thar as no one was allowed to thar for the park was owned by a union man and his property was garded by some of our own men

erley one morning in May I took my gun and went out to see the park when I got ther the sun was jist coming up I walked along the fence and looked thru the cracks I saw a grate meney deer feeding on the nice grass thay wer verry tempting for I had never eaten any venison at that time I did want to kill one and take it to camp but I refrained from doing so as it mite git me in to a lot of truble I passed on to the part of the park that was covered with hevey timber thar I saw meney squirls jumping a round up in the large oaks I climed over the fence and went in to the park a bout fifty yards I looked up in to the tree tops and thar wer squirls by the dozen I began to shoot and ever time I shot a squirrel dropped to the ground I shot six times and had six squirls on the ground I pick them up and run to the fence as quik as I coud then I sat down on a log and waited for some thing to hapen

I did not have long to wait for thru the woods came a union soldier on a horse he did not see me until I spoke to him he asked me if I had heard gun shots I said yes I heard six shots then he asked me if I had seen eney one I told him I was the onley man I had seen in a mile of the park then he asked me if I had been shooting I told him not to ask

me so money questions I mite tell him a lie then I picked up the six squirrels and held them up so he could see them he just raised his hat and said you have a dam good gun thar but you had better go now as you have plenty for dinner I said goodby pard and good luck to you as I made my way towards the camp I saw a patch of potatoes so I thought young potatoes and squarel would make a pretty good dinner so I stoped and filled my haversack so our tent had a big dinner that day

time rolled on June was half gone pay day came and now we thought we wil git to go home but in a few days we had orders to go to New Orleans my my what a disappointment to most of the men and boys particular the men with a famley for my self it made verry little differance for I wanted to be on the move I did not like arme camp life at all

in a few days we marched west to Johnsonvill on the Tennessee river thar we took a river boat for New Orleans we went down the Tenn to the Ohio river then in to the Mississippi river I enjoyed the trip to Orleans better than eney trip I had ever taken I think traveling by steam boat is a very pleasant way to travel we wer three or four days makeing the trip

we camped below the city near fort Jackson the mosquitoes wer so bad we had to make a smoke at one end of our tent and let it draw thru the tent or we would not git any sleep the city was patrolled by a negro regiment and when our brigade got thar we had a good money fights with fist and brick bats so the negro regiment was taken out of town and one of our own regments put on duty in the city

jist befor we left nashvill we had pay day and now the boys had plenty of money and thay all went to the city to look a round Capt would not giv us passes so went eney way while I was in town I hired a suit of citizens cloths I had my photograph taken in it I was in the city five or six days took my meals at the french market wher I got good milk to drink good eggs and the best fish I ever ate ever thing to eat was cheap I could git all I could eat for 25¢ had to pay one dollar a night for a good bed with mosquito bar over it

I started on my long walk back to camp with onley one of the boys with me that had gone to town with me as I came in to camp I met Capt well he says I am glad you come back for I am giting lonesom hear all by my self he says the regiment has orders to go to Texas in August and I am afrade some of the boys wil desirt when thay find it out I told Capt I would like to go to Texas if I did not haft to stay to long

we stayed at New Orleans untill a bout the middle of August then got a board a ship and sailed for Port Lavaca on the Matagorda bay Texas it was a grand site for me as we sailed out of the mouth of the Mississippi river in to the Gulf of Mexico the muddy water of the river extended far out in to the gulf where the muddy water met the green watters of the gulf thay did not mix it put in mind of a green pastur with one corner plowed up makeing it look brown it was nice and calm all tho the ship\ rolled a little and I became verry sick

as did all the rest of the boys and men

all of us made our beds on deck as it was verry hot we had canvas stretched over us for shade to lie in I could have enjoyed the trip fine if I could have sat up and walked a bout as it was the most of us had to lay flat on our backs all the time or we would git sick and throw up our dinner we wer on the watter one night and two days

we landed at Port Lavaca at ten P.M. marched a cross three miles a cross the plains to a small stream the moon was shining bright and felt just like the ground was rolling in waves jist like the gulf watters did when I was on ship it made me step high and walk like a blind horse som jack rabbits jumped out of the grass I thought thay wer young deer we did not have our guns loaded so thay got a way from us we went in on to the banks of the stream that had a few scrubey oaks and willows scatered a long its banks thar was not much watter in the bottom of the muddy stream and it was warm and full of snakes and frogs so we dug holes or little wells near the edge of the watter by so doing we could git watter that we could use for cooking but it was not fit to drink

hear I thought I would die for the want of a good drink of watter and of the regiment made complant to the colonel told him to git us out of thar or thay would leve him and go home so the colonel and the Dr. started out to look for a better place to camp all of us washed our cloths and cleaned up a little after our dirty voyage on the old ship

the next day we moved north to a new camp on a larger stream wher we had plenty watter but it was not good to drink we stayed in this camp three weeks and some of the boys became sick with a kind of slow fever I did not feel a bit good my self one evening I took my gun and went to the stream by myself to see if I could find a jack rabbit I was pushing my way thru the tall grass when I looked down and saw a large rattle snake jist redy to strike at me I brought my gun down from sholder and shot his head off he had thirteen rattles on his tale I cut them off and put them in my pocket so I could show the boys in camp what I had killed

I sat down close to the stream to rest I heard some thing in the watter and I looked thru the bushes and thar in the creek was a large gray wolf lying in the watter cooling him self I kept still untill got out on the bank then I shot him dead that was the first wolf I had ever seen I could not cross the creek at that place so I went back to camp and told the boys that I had killed a wolf and rattle snake I felt that I was a prey good hunter the next morning I got up at day light and went up the creek to wher I had killed the wolf and thar close to the dead wolf stood his mate I shot her dead not moor than three or four yards from her dead mate

I saw a grate meney frogs hear that had horns I also saw a drove of wild bores some verry pretty ones in drove I also saw the larest drove of cattle hear I ever have seen thar must have been several thousand of them on the planes the planes hear wer perfectly level and I could see catile for five miles a way the drove would be a mile wide and I could not see either end of the drove thar wer all kinds of them all mixed up old and young big and

little thar was no one driving them thay wer jist grazing a long on the move all the time thay would travel west in the morning and east in the evening we had plenty of the best beef I ever ate while we wer in Texas

it was some time in September that we left this camp and went back to Port Lavaca wher we went in to camp at the edge of the little town Port Lavaca wher two or three hundred people lived the bad watter of Texas was having a bad effect on all of us I was not a bit wel I had the camp diarrhoea prety bad at times hear at Post Lavaca we had cistern watter to use and it was much healthier for us hear we passed a way two months or moor of lazy camp life not much excitement of eney kind

Port Lavaca was quite a shiping port at that time it had a large wharf built out in to the bay a bout a quarter of a mile or moor when the tide was in large ships came in up to the end of the wharf out in the bay wher the wharf was shedded over the ships wer unloaded hear and the frate stored in this large shed

one day a goverment ship came in with a load of provision for the arme I went with a squad of twenty men to unload the ship ever man in the squad took his haversack for it would take us all day to do the job from the deck of the ship thar was an incline bridge down to the wharfe this bridge had a smooth slick floor the saylor boys of the ship would hist the frate out of the hull of the ship to the deck then I took charge of it I had five men on deck with me and five at the bottom of the bridge on the wharf I worked ten men at a time for one houre for each tem in that way I would take care of the frate as fast as the saylors would get it up from the hull of the ship

but it was hard work we would roll a box or barral on to the incline brige and let it slide down to floor of the wharf

when we put a barral on the brige we had to let it go down end ways if it rolled down it would go to fast and smash ever thing it came in contact with the last thing we had to unload was one hundred barals of sugar when we came to the last barral the boys did not let it slide end ways but started it rolling down then yelled at the boys below to get out of the way the boys must have been looking for it for I looked down on the wharf thar was not a man in sight the barral of sugar went down that brige like it was shot out of a cannon and went fifty feet a cross the wharf shed and hit a post and spilt the sugar on then floor we all went to camp with our haversacks full of sugar for the boys all thought it would not look verry nice to leve the sugar thar on the floor and we had no place fit to put it but in our haversacks I left two men on gard and the rest of us went to camp

that was a bout all that happened out of the ordinary routine of duty I put in a lot of time looking for sea shells a long the shore of the bay I took some to camp ever day untill I had quite a pile in one corner of my tent

time rolled on December came long I was feeling bad I could not eat the goverment food milk would help me moor than eney thing else I could not all ways git it thar was an

old woman that lived close to our camp that kept ten or twelve cows I went to see her a bout giting milk of her she wanted 5¢ a quart I had no money but my good luck was still with me for while I was talking to the old woman a man a friend of hers came to see her he lived a way up in the cuntry on a large farm I had a long talk with him he told me he had two hundred head of cattle and that the wolfs wer killing all his calfs I told him I had killed two wolfs he asked me how I killed them I told him I shot them well he says I would like to see that gun I said come with me I wil let you see it he went to camp with me and as soon as he saw my gun he wanted it he had forty silver dollars that he giv me for my gun so I had all the milk I wanted from this time till I left Texas

a bout this time Joe Boyed was found dead in his bunk one morning no one was with him when he died thar wer three or four other deaths in the regiment all died of camp diarrhoea and I bleve I would have died if I could not have had milk to live on I loaned out all the forty dollars except ten the boys wer all out of money so I let each one have a little and it did them a lot of good for thay wer verry tired of goverment food and some of them wer sick like my self

on the 14th day of December 1865 the 57th regiment was mustered out of the United States service my discharge was made out and signed at Victoria Texas as that was head quarters for the regiment at that time Victoria was a bout fifteen miles down the bay from Port Lavaca

one evening a short time after this an old goverment ship came in to the bay to take us back to New Orleans ships could not git in and out off the bay onley at verry high tide so we had to wait a few days for the tide to come high enufh for the ship to run over the bar thay wer anxious day for me for I was a prey sick boy I was afrade if I did not git a way prey soon I never would git a way from Texas

I had made a nice box that helt a bout a peck or moor covered it with oil cloth put a lock on it and put all the nice sea shells and other odd trinkets that I had picked up in my travels over the diffrent parts of the south cuntry I did not sleep good nights for thinking of going home yet I did not know what kind of home coming it would be as I had not heard from thar for a long time

I think it was the 18th december that we had a storm a hard wind from the south that filled the bay full we got a board the ship a bout 4 p.m. and sailed out over the bar in a storm the first wave that hit the ship after we crossed the bar was as high as the ship I was out on deck holding fast to one of the mast when the ship went down in the trough between the waves I could see watter as high as the ship on both sides of me we wer out in the gulf four nights and three days the storm blew us sixteen hours out of our way and the strangest part of it was that I did not get sea sick I could eat all I could git

when we got in to the mississippi river and got some of the river watter to drink I began to feel better the old ship sprung a leak while out on the gulf storm and thay kept two steam

pumps running all the time to keep the water out of her but the officers did not let us know any thing about it till we got to New Orleans then the old ship was condemned and put out of commission

we landed at New Orleans just at day light I started up town to get something to eat I saw a man with a wagon load of oranges the largest I had ever seen I asked what he sold them at he said they were not his but if I would help unload them he would give me two dozen I helped take them off the wagon and pile them on the side walk I picked out the largest ones I could find I took a part of the sea shells out of my box and put four of the largest oranges in the box to take home

about noon we got aboard a large steam boat the star of the west the largest that run up the river I think it was the 22nd or 23rd of december that we left New Orleans about as happy as a bunch of boys and men as ever went up the mississippi river the weather was warm and nice and pleasant when we started I felt better than I had for some time and I enjoyed the two first days fine we stopped at Vicksburg on Christmas day from there on it got colder and colder as we went up the river at Memphis I began to see ice floating in the river I made my bed close to a large smoke stack where I slept warm when we got to Cairo Illinois the ice was coming down the river so thick the boat had to stop it could not go up the river any further we stayed in Cairo all night and till noon the next day then we got a board an old frigate train we were all very mad because they did not let us have a passenger car to ride in as it was so very cold we all most froze I was lucky for I had gotten a heavy cavalry over coat just before I left Texas I had never worn it till now many of the boys did not have any over coat of any kind as we had been in a warm climate and did not need over coats but I still remembered the cold winds of Indiana and got me the heaviest army coat I could of government at a price less than one half what it would cost at home so now I was well paid for my fore thought

it was sun up next morning when we stopped at Mattoon Illinois a way out side of town we got out on the frozen ground not a thing to make a fire with no wind brake of any kind cold grub to eat we were told that a nether train would be a long soon to take us to Indianapolis Indiana I was afraid to go up town for fear the train would come a long and I might get left so we had to wait and wait there in the cold wind we heard the church bells ring the first we had heard for two years and I knew it was sunday

we left Mattoon at 4 p.m. on an old frigate train we were glad to get in out of the cold wind when we pulled in to Indianapolis it was mid night and they were firing cannons for new years morning 1866 we went out to camp Morton got in to a good warm barrack that had large hot stoves going full blast the weather was very cold below zero it took us till day light to get the cold shakes out of us then we were given a government breakfast of good strong coffee bread and fried pork the last meal the U.S. ever give me and I enjoyed it much better than I had the first one two years ago

we wer told to at camp at two PM to git our pay and discharge I pulled out for the city to git cleaned up and to git a full out fit of clothing I was good and tired of that old blue uniform I felt like I was some other boy with my new suit on the clothing man took me to a big hotell for dinner then I told him come to camp at 2 PM and I would pay his bills in the afternoon I got my discharge and my pay in full for my service in the U S Arme Johnney Davis and I went for the railroad depot to git a train for Richmond Ind

it was 8 PM when we arrived in Richmond Johnney went to see his cousin and I went to see Sister Evaline as she was still in Richmond when I went in she was verry verry much surprised to see me as she did not know that I was in Indiana yet I was not very well I still had the diarrhea and I had not slept much for three or four nights so I told sister to find me a bed as soon as she coud she giv me a feather bed the first I had slept on since I left home

the next morning the ground was covered with snow to the depth of six or eight inches and below zero Sister Evaline had not ben home sience I went to the arme she did not know much about the folks at home so I left her and got with Johnney Davis we looked for someone from Willamsburg that would take us home but coud not find any one it was so cold no one came to Richmond that day so at 2 PM we got a livery rig a buggy with two black horses an a niger driver to take us to Willamsburg it was four oclock when we got thar the two black horses were as white as snow when we got thar we got out at the old hotell we were so cold we coud not walk good and a lot of folks came in to see us we were so cold we coud not talk much for along time Dr Taylors lived just across the street from the hotell old doc sent Jimmie over after me I did not know Jimmie he had growen a lot since I had seen him I shal never forgit that meeting with Dr Taylor and his wife thay made me sit down between them and thay both talked at once old doc looked at me prety close then he says look hear Rees you are sick somthing is wrong with you one of your eyes is bad I told him my truble well he says I wil fix up somthing for you and off he went to his shop Mrs Taylor told me that little Kgte was over in Ohio on a visit

the doctor came in in a little bit with a lot of medison for me he says Rees you will haft to take dam good care of you self or you will kick the bucket yet he said it would be hard on a well man to come up hear from that warm south country in the winter time with the weather down below zero let alone a sick boy you can not be to carefull then he gave me thirty dollars of the money I had left with him when I went to the arme

I asked him if he knew what Father thought of me by this time he said no I have be afrade to talk to him for he was the maddest man I ever saw when you went to the arme well I said I must go up and see the folks and find out what thay think of me Doc said Rees if you do not find any better place to stay than hear just come back you will find an open door all ways for you

as I went up the street to my home I wonder what kind of talk Father would giv me

I rather expected him to preach to me untill I went to bed but when I went into the house my sister Mahala met me at the door she took both of my hands and looked at me with tears runing down her face and said Alvarezze you are sick you do not look well at all Mother came to me and said you poor boy how glad I am you got home safe she said I never thought you would come back alive I said how about Father what does he think of me now Oh she said he has never said a word a bout you since you left and I do not know what he will say to you

Father was out feeding his horses when I got thar Mother and Mahala saw him coming with some wood for the fireplace thay had me to fathers room and sit down by the fireplace Father came in put the wood on the fire and as he straightened up I raised to my feet and said as I helt out my hand howdy do he looked at me and said I do not know you I said don't know your own boy he said you are not my boy anymore you can not stay hear I turned around and left the room and went into the kitchen where Mother and Mahala wer crying I began to put on my over coat when Father came in and said you can stay hear a fue days to see your mother then he went back to his own room and shut the door

I was some what stunned when father said he did not know me and did not want me to stay thar I did not know what to say or think going away from home did not bother the least little bit but to have father tell me to leve completely shooked me and took away all the enjoyment of coming home Brother Lease came while we were eating supper he was working about a mile north of town after supper I went with Lease to the place where he worked and stayed all night with him I was not well and Lease was up and down with me all night

befor sunup next morning I had a visitor Joe Boyeds father came to see me Joe had died while we were in Texas and now his father had walked moor than a mile thru the cold zero morning just to have me tell him about Joe poor old man he just sit ther befor the fire and cried like a child while I told of Joes death Joe Boyed was in the same company with me and he was so mean that no one would bunk with him and when he was at home he was a disgrace to his Fathers famley

As I sit ther and looked at the poor old man I coud not help wondering what I had don to make my father go back on me and disown me I all ways tryed to be a good boy both at home and the arme and all ways had a lot of friend wher ever I was all this was beyound my understanding

old Uncle Sam Boyed was a good man a very large hevey built man was a well to do man with a large famley of respectable children except Joe Mr Boyed told me he mite call on me sometime to go to Texas with him to bring Joes body back home I told him I would do all I coud to help him just to let me know when he was redy to go he bid me goodby with tears runing down his face but I never seen the poor old man eney moor as I left Ind in less than a month

Leafe and I went to town after brakefast we went to the old mill to see my old friend Tom Edwards the miller he was glad to see me Leafe told him how my Father had treated me old Tom came up to me and put his hands on my shoulders and said Alvareze come and stay with me Clint is not at home and I wil be glad to have you come and help me run the mill just make yourself one of the famley so I went home for dinner than took my clothes over to the Edwards to make my home for the present time

I stayed thar just one night the next morning about eight AM I was sitting by the window where I coud look across the street and see fathers back yard and garden I saw father go out to his garden with a pick and spade and began opening of cabbage and turnips after he had taken the cabbage and turnips to the house Mother came runing over to the Edwards and told me to come right home as Father had said Alvareze was sick and what he needed was vegetables so I went back home and found father in a much better humer but he would not talk to me was verry good to wait on me at meal time as soon as I got better health I visited around with my friends and relation I had made up my mind to go to Illinois to see my two Brothers Bas and Mell beyond that I had not decided what I would do

So ends the history of my arme life

A few incidents of my childhood

I think I was seven or eight years old Father was going over east to the old farm three miles away to git a load of corn it was about the first of May it was a nice warm day and he told me I might go with him that pleased me I was redy to go but Mother thought I had better not go as I might git hurt or something might hapen to me but daddy though I could go so I went

we went along a road that was made thru a very low flat land and in some places ponds in makeing the road thay had layed logs and poles crosswise that was verry rough riding over that road daddy had to hold me to keep me from falling out I was glad enuph when we got over that rough part but we got thar and daddy got his load of corn and started back when we came to rough place in the road he had to drive verry slow or the corn would all jolt out of the wagon

it was a warm day and the horses got prety hot and so did daddy so we stopped at a log house that was at the side of the road where thar was some colored people lived by the name of Mitchel to watter his horses and to git a drink for him self and me old Mrs Mitchel was siting on a log close to the well working with some gourds she would saw a piece off one end side then take the seeds out and she could use it for a dipper

she had just completed a verry large one when we drove up daddy helped me down and I ran to where the old woman was and picked up the large gourd and looked at it and while the old woman was talking to me thar came from around the house a lot of little young ducks thay came right up to me thay were the first young ducks I ever seen and I could not keep my hands off of them the old woman took the large gourd from me and picked up three young ducks and put them in the gourd tied a cloth over the hole then she picked me up and sat me on top of the load of corn then she gave me the gourd with the ducks in it and told me to giv the gourd to my mother and I was to have the ducks for my own and told me to dig worms for them

so when we got home I took the gourd and the ducks in the house to let mother and the girls see the ducks mother said father would never let her have ducks and she though it strange that he let me bring them home with me I told mother the colored woman told me to giv my mother the gourd mother was glad to git it as it was a verry large one and had nice handle with a crook on the end of it to hang it up by mother kept that gourd for years she had that gourd when I came home from the arme

the ducks was the first property I ever owned I took good care of them and put in most of my time diging worms for them I never let them git hungry and by fall thay were as big as old ducks one day aunt Sarah Sharp mothers sister came to visit us and she seen my ducks and told me if I would come to her house she would giv me a drake to put with them

so Lafe Melvin and I and Mother and 2 or 3 of my sisters got in the big wagon one

Sunday morning in hickorey nut time and drove up to Uncle Jerry Thorps to see Aunt Sarah and a lot of cousins we all went to the woods and gathered hickorynuts we got about two bushels to take home with us and Aunt Sarah gave me a nice big drake and we went home all of us feeling like we had had a fine day of it when we got home mother told daddy I had brought home a drake and that the farm would be alive with ducks next year but daddy thought bud would not raise ducks enufh to hurt eney thing but befor the year rolled around he thought different

the next spring my ducks began to lay in March and each duck layed 50 or 60 eggs and I think mothers old setting hens all got a job that spring and summer for I soon had the place covered with young ducks the mill race was close to our house and the little ducks would git in the race and then the old hen would raise a big fuss and fly from one side of the mill race to the other as the ducks got bigger the old hen would leve them go and giv them up as a bad lot of chicks

I think I raised over one hundred that spring and it was a prety sight to see them stand on thar heads in the watter hunting for somithing to eat in the bottom of the mill race

but daddy did not think it so prety to see them all come in to the hog lot when he fed his hogs for the ducks would eat the corn as fast as the hogs would bite it off the cob and that made daddy grunt prety big

well by the time the fall of the year had come my ducks were full grown verry fat nice and ever body that seen them talked about them looking so nice and we were all proud of them except daddy and ever time he saw them eating corn with his hogs he would shake his head and grunt

well one day my brother and I went hickory nut hunting and was gone all day and when we got home thar was not a duck on the place daddy had sold all of them to a poultry man for twenty cents each when I got in the house daddy told me I coud have the money if I would divide it with my brothers Lufe and Melvin I told him I would so he gave me something over twenty dollars we had never had so much money in all our lives that much money would buy lot things in thos days nice caps 50 to 75 cents each so we got all of the store clothes we wanted and we were verry proud of them for we had never had eney thing but home made cloths so that is what my ducks dun for me and my brothers

a boy can make a lot of money raising ducks if somebody will furnish the feed free a starved duck is poor property give a duck all he can eat all the time and you wil have a big nice looking duck

